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# POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

## On Hispanics and the GOP

Samuel Francis (*Principalities & Powers*, April 2000) is correct in much of his analysis of the weaknesses of Gov. George W. Bush's political strategy for attracting Hispanic votes. He is also correct in debunking the endlessly repeated canard that Bush won 49 percent (rather than 39 percent) of the Texas Hispanic vote in his successful 1998 reelection effort against a very weak and underfunded Democratic opponent.

However, since I have made very similar criticisms of Bush's strategy and successes, I was quite surprised at being treated with hostility and placed in the Bush camp on these issues. I would suspect that my very strong opposition to ethnic separatist policies such as affirmative action and bilingual education is simply not good enough for someone like Dr. Francis, whose views on ethnic issues seem aligned with those of the "white nationalist" camp. Thus, he appears to be the counterpart to the LULAC activists whom he decries.

Finally, Dr. Francis doubts that the dramatic fall in Hispanic support for GOP candidates (especially in California) is directly linked to Proposition 187, but the facts prove otherwise. Until the 1994 campaign for Prop. 187, almost any viable Republican candidate running statewide in California could expect 40 to 50 percent of the Hispanic vote. Moderate Republican Pete Wilson received 47 percent in his 1990 gubernatorial race, and conservative Bruce Herschensohn won 40 percent in his 1992 U.S. Senate race. But since 1994, Republican candidates have rarely won even 20 percent of the Hispanic vote. Republican support for the harsh provisions of Prop. 187, which would have expelled 300,000 immigrant children from public schools and which was supported by a campaign filled with harsh anti-Hispanic rhetoric and images, is the obvious cause.

*—Ron K. Unz*
*Chairman, English for the Children*
*Palo Alto, CA*

## Dr. Francis Replies:

Like many neoconservative and libertarian proponents of mass immigration who say they want and expect immigrants to assimilate, Mr. Unz doesn't grasp that you can't have immigration from non-Western countries on the scale the United States has received for the last 30 years (more than 30 million legal immigrants) and actually get assimilation as a result. The sheer magnitude of the migration means that the immigrants' non-Western cultural habits will be reinforced by the immense communities and powerful movements they form inside this country.

This will take place even if governments and politicians do not actively encourage it with bilingual education, affirmative action, multiculturalist curricula, and similar programs designed to retard assimilation and weaken national and cultural bonds. With such programs, assimilation becomes not only impossible but even taboo.

Ron Unz has indeed resisted such anti-assimilation programs, but the simplest, most obvious, and most effective means of encouraging assimilation would be to reduce the numbers of immigrants significantly, and neither Mr. Unz nor his colleagues in the pro-immigration lobby will countenance doing so. Indeed, he remains a vocal supporter of mass immigration and a vocal opponent of any measure designed to slow it down or halt it.

I am unaware that I treated him with "hostility" in my April article. The three references in my column mention him as "a pro-immigration activist" who had written a less than accurate sentence about Governor Bush's showing among Hispanic voters, as an opponent of bilingual education, and as one who has blamed Bob Dole's lack of Hispanic votes in 1996 on Republican support for Prop. 187 in 1994. I see nothing "hostile" or untrue in any of these references, unless reminding readers of Mr. Unz's zealousness for immigration is taken as an act of hostility.

Nevertheless, as long as we are calling names like "white nationalist," why should I not call Mr. Unz an outright traitor to the American people because of his zeal to import a new population whose language, culture, and political loyalties are radically different from, if not often outright hostile to, those of the



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old population? The civilization created on this continent by British and European peoples cannot survive the disappearance of the people themselves; it is preposterous to expect that civilization to be transmitted as a functioning whole to another population to whom it is entirely alien. Perhaps awareness of this commonsense truth makes me a "white nationalist," but I am quite bored with being called unpleasant names by phonies like Mr. Unz who unctuously spout off about "white nationalism" when their own concept of a "nation" consists merely in lip service to a handful of Enlightenment platitudes torn from the Declaration of Independence and whose "loyalty" to their country apparently reaches no further than how much money can be milked from it.

Mr. Unz may be correct about Hispanic support for California state Republican candidates prior to Prop. 187. My article, however, was almost entirely about the impact of the Hispanic vote on presidential politics—specifically, its impact on the 1996 Dole campaign and the Bush campaign this year. In any case, Republicans could make up for the lost Hispanic votes by mobilizing white American voters around immigration control. Governor Bush, as of this time (June), is now leading Al Gore in a national poll by 5 points, despite trailing Mr. Gore among Hispanics by some 12 points in the same poll. The poll shows not only that Mr. Bush has failed to attract Hispanic voters—despite his pandering to them and his support for more immigration—but also that it remains possible for a GOP presidential candidate to beat a Democrat in a national election without winning the Hispanic vote at all.

Moreover, the decline of Hispanic support for other GOP candidates in California may be due to factors other than Prop. 187. Does the rise of a powerful left-wing Hispanic political movement have nothing to do with the decline? What about enactment of the so-called "motor voter" bill that was widely predicted to lead to the death of the GOP in California? What about Republican opposition to welfare, affirmative action, unions, and other liberal causes that many low-income Hispanic voters support? Why should the decline of Hispanic support for Republicans be blamed exclusively on Prop. 187? How convenient to blame all of it on Prop. 187 when you already favor mass immigration for other reasons! To argue that the decline is caused by Prop. 187 alone simply because it followed the 1994 ballot measure is an elementary example of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. Surely Mr. Unz, reported by the *New Republic* as having probably the world's highest IQ, can recognize a logical fallacy when he sees one.

As for the cruelty of "expelling 300,000 immigrant children from public schools," so what? Prop. 187 would have forced no one out of school who had a legal right to be in this country. Again, Mr. Unz's pretense of concern for assimilation is belied by his zeal for the "rights" of the children of illegal aliens. The first, elementary step toward assimilation is to enter this country in accordance with its laws.

Finally, I cannot speak about the "harsh anti-Hispanic rhetoric and images" with which the Prop. 187 campaign was supposedly conducted, not having been part of the campaign or present in the state at the time. But I am aware of the innumerable death threats, obscene calls and letters, viciously anti-American and anti-white vituperation, and outright physical violence with which pro-187 activists have been assaulted and are being assaulted to this day by Hispanic and pro-immigration fanatics. It is telling that Mr. Unz's tears are shed over the "harsh" things said about Hispanic immigrants and not over the filthy and dangerous things said and done to his fellow citizens merely for wishing to enforce their country's immigration laws.

## On the Return of Jim Crow

William Murchison's "Color Me Kweisi" (*Views*, May 2000) brings to mind an aspect of the so-called "civil rights" movement which has played an active part in undermining this country. While the left has failed to achieve total collectivization through the democratic process, it has introduced a caste system that can circumvent both referenda and ethics via "civil rights" laws.


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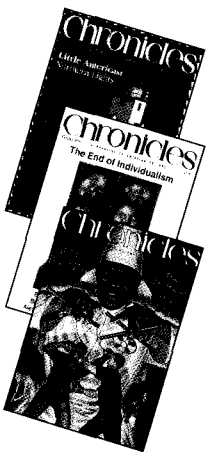


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"Jim Crow lies six feet under" may be true on the surface, but the reality is that "Whites Only" in sections of the country has been replaced by "Diversity Only" throughout the country. And what a monotonous entity "diversity" is: a super flux that, like Clinton's cabinet and postmodern art, generates constant sameness.

The real effect of having government in the business of determining intentions and the boundaries of free association has been to apply the exclusionary abuses of Jim Crow laws across the board. When Mr. Murchison writes that "Dallas's business community, not the federal courts, ended segregation," he provides a model of the way these things should go. Instead, we can see the real face of "liberalism" at work in the decrees of the therapeutic state. When we attempt to address cultural problems with political solutions, the state becomes the highest authority in every aspect of life. Thanks to the Department of Education, our colleges now function as an arm of the big business/big government oligarchy, where, in Mussolini's words, "only the state can know which liberties are to be left to the individual and which are too important to be entrusted to anything but the state." Mr. Murchison exhorts the leaders of the NAACP to "get a life." A good place for them to start would be to help eradicate this new caste system. What does "fairness" mean when everyone must be placed in a racial/ethnic/gender/sexual orientation caste before we can even look at any other qualities he may have?

*—Tom Sheeley*
*Flagstaff, Arizona*

## CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

**THE CONFEDERATE FLAG** has become a heated topic this election year. As George W. Bush and John McCain battled in South Carolina for the Republican presidential nomination, the New York Young Republican Club invited Richard Lowry, the editor of *National Review*, to discuss the Republican Party's prospects for November.

In the question-and-answer session that followed, Mr. Robert Hornak, the club's president, asked Mr. Lowry why the Republican Party did not condemn the Confederate Battle Flag. Alleging the flag was a symbol of treason, sedition, and slavery, Mr. Hornak maintained that, by not condemning it, the GOP alienates black voters, ensuring that they vote Democratic. Mr. Lowry agreed, adding that Republicans don't condemn the Confederate flag because they want the "redneck" vote.

In attacking the flag, both gentlemen unintentionally aid their political opponents. For a more compelling case can be made against the "Stars and Stripes" as a symbol of slavery, treason, and sedition than against the Confederate Battle Flag.

There was no legal right under British law for a colony to secede from the British Empire. The actions of the American revolutionaries, therefore, were treasonous and seditious; their flag was a symbol of treason and sedition.

The Stars and Stripes also symbolizes a country established as a slaveholding republic. When the Declaration of Independence was signed, the institution of slavery was legally sanctioned in all 13 colonies. There were twice as many slaves in New York as in Georgia. One of the grievances in the Declaration of Independence was London's policy of freeing slaves—euphemistically phrased as "excit[ing] domestic insurrection." In 1783, when the British army withdrew from an independent United States, at least 18,000 slaves freed by the Crown joined the British exodus.

The Stars and Stripes remained a symbol of sedition after the country achieved independence. Six years later, the first republic under the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union was overthrown by the Constitutional Convention.

The United States recognized the right of secession even after 1789. The right of secession from the second republic was explicitly reserved by the states of Virginia, New York, and Rhode Island in their documents ratifying the Constitution.

It was the Stars and Stripes, not the Confederate Battle Flag, that became the symbol of sedition in 1861. Lincoln overthrew the second republic established by the U.S. Constitution when he launched his war against the South. As the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the "Prize Cases" (December 1862): "[Congress] cannot declare war against a State or any number of States by virtue of any clause in the Constitution . . . [The President] has no power to initiate or declare war against a foreign nation or a domestic State . . . "

The Stars and Stripes became a symbol of total war against the innocent: Food and medicine were contraband; women, children, the sick, and the elderly became legitimate targets. The Emancipation Proclamation was a call not for liberty, but for a race war. As Lincoln stated: "I have a right to take any measure which may best subdue the enemy; nor do I urge objections of a moral nature, in view of possible consequences of insurrection and massacre at the South."

In addition, many ex-slaves were forced to work on plantations loyal to Lincoln. They could suffer a loss of pay or rations for acts of laziness, disobedience, or insolence. They were often required to obtain a pass if they wished to leave the plantation. And they were subject to provost marshals employed to ensure the "freed" slaves displayed "faithful service, respectful deportment, correct discipline and perfect subordination."

Northern whites should not dismiss the idea that the Stars and Stripes could be banned. The American flag was temporarily removed from two schoolrooms—one in California, the other in Michigan—in response to the demand of Third World militants who claimed that the flag was a symbol of "racism" and "oppression." As Third World immigration transforms the United States from a European-American majority nation into a European-American minority nation, the demand to ban the Stars and Stripes will only grow.

If the Stars and Stripes is banned, Northern whites will have no one to blame but themselves. For in attacking the Confederate Battle Flag, they have provided the very arguments that most effectively undermine the legitimacy of our national flag.

*—Joseph E. Fallon*

**BILL CLINTON**, many conservatives believe, is a smooth political operator. Shifty, unprincipled, and generally odious he may be, they say, but Clinton is a "consummate politician" and a master salesman.

Mr. Clinton's performance in Moscow during the first weekend in June did



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not confirm this view. He did not sell the National Missile Defense (NMD) initiative to President Vladimir Putin. The following day, addressing the Russian parliament—the first ranking Western leader to do so—he misjudged his audience badly.

Assuming his audience's ignorance of his own legal problems, Mr. Clinton said that "a strong state should use its strength to reinforce the rule of law, protect the powerless against the powerful, [and] defend democratic freedoms. . . . The answer to law without order is not order without law." He warned the Duma against amassing power "for its own sake" and defended America's deeply unpopular plan for a missile defense shield. He then proceeded to lecture Russian lawmakers on the initiatives they needed to take in order to become America's full-fledged partner, from tax reforms and uniform legal codes to the environment. He said that Russia's journey to full and democratic membership of the global economy would be "one of the most important I witness in my lifetime," but he made it clear that such membership can happen only on his own terms. Political commentator Aleksandr Sadchikov noted that "the standard collection of U.S. ideological stereotypes was trotted out—globalization, respect for minority rights, joint security, environment. The president's monotonous delivery and the nature of the translation made you feel you were watching an unlicensed video."

The speech was supposed to be the climax of a three-day visit which had been hobbled from the start by Russia's refusal to defer to U.S. demands to update the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty of 1972 to allow for the NMD. Apparently hoping to sway the deputies where he failed with President Putin, Mr. Clinton spoke of the treaty in some detail, arguing that America sought only technical changes that "people of goodwill" should be able to accept. But he spoke as if the deputies did not know that he had effectively rejected Mr. Putin's compromise suggestion for a joint anti-missile shield. In a radio program the day before, Clinton had told a caller that the Russian proposal for a joint system to shoot down "rogue" missiles was impractical and that he would go ahead with the NMD regardless of Russia's refusal to play along. Even for the Duma's most pro-Western members, that amounted to a snub. It disclosed the Clinton administration's current "negotiating strategy" on NMD: It threatens to abrogate the ABM treaty unless the Russians agree to amend it as desired by Washington. But it is naive, or else deliberately provocative, to expect Putin to perform an act of submission that is contrary to his country's interests and that would make him look weak in the early days of his presidency.

The worst of the speech was yet to come, as Mr. Clinton attempted to equate NATO's bombing of Serbia with Russia's involvement in Chechnya: "I know you disagreed with what I did in Kosovo. You know I disagreed with what you did in Chechnya." Presenting this parallel to the Duma was tantamount to preaching the merits of free abortion on demand to a Southern Baptist audience. Even Mr. Clinton's most sentimental flourishes, among them a supposedly rousing finale about his seven visits to Russia, had a hollow ring. "All my life I have wanted the people of my country and the people of your country to be friends and allies, to lead the world away from war towards the dreams of children," he said as he wrapped up his speech. But the deputies who bothered to turn up—there were many empty seats—calmly read the newspapers or stared at their watches.

Clinton's visit displayed the limits of salesmanship. Back home, he may fool most of the people at least some of the time, but he cannot sell a bad product abroad. The Russians know that he is in a hurry: To get the first 100 NMD missile interceptors up and running in 2005 as planned, construction would have to commence in early 2001. But this cannot be done unless the world's first strategic-arms agreement, the ABM Treaty, is amended by November of this year. NMD is in clear violation of that treaty, and if Russia refuses to agree to the amendment, Moscow must be notified six months in advance that the United States is about to abrogate its terms. For his part, Clinton does not want to end his presidency with the "legacy" of unilaterally scrapping arms-control treaties. He may be the first U.S. president in a quarter-century to leave office without signing a major arms-reduction treaty.

Before Clinton's Moscow trip, there was some speculation about a "grand bargain" in which the United States would trade off deeper cuts in nuclear arsenals sought by Russia in exchange for Moscow's acquiescence to NMD. But the Clinton administration has painted itself into a corner, and Putin knows it. The Russian president may give in eventually, but he will require a much juicier plum in return.

Those long rows of empty seats in the Duma aptly reflected the vacuity of Clinton's Moscow performance. But the Russian tradition of creating mirages to conceal inconvenient reality swiftly kicked in. The prominent and reliable Moscow daily *Izvestiya* noted that many deputies snubbed Mr. Clinton, whereupon "internal affairs ministry officers and security people filled their empty seats in the chamber." According to the paper, about a third of those present in the Duma—and the most enthusiastic clappers at that—were state employees brought from their posts at a short notice.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

**THE SUPREME COURT** attracts the most attention when it does something new, or does something so old that it seems new. For example, the Court's decision last May declaring that Congress had no authority to enact the Violence Against Women Act under the guise of regulating interstate commerce received plenty of media attention. And since 1995, the Court has begun tentatively to enforce the constitutional limitations on the powers granted to Congress, something it had ignored since 1937.

But some of the Supreme Court's most important work is performed when it *refuses* to do something new, declining to create an "innovative" exception to constitutional rights. Thus, the most important Bill of Rights decision of the 1999-2000 term came when the Court refused to invent a loophole that would have nearly destroyed the Fourth Amendment, which prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures.

In *Florida* v. *J.L.*, an anonymous telephone tipster had claimed that a young black male, wearing a plaid shirt and standing at a certain bus stop, was carrying a gun. Some police officers went to the bus stop and saw three young black males, one with a plaid shirt. They frisked him and found a gun.

Under current Fourth Amendment doctrine, the search was unconstitutional. The 15-year-old had not been doing anything illegal or suspicious, or anything which would make a police officer concerned about public safety. The tipster was anonymous, and had offered nothing beyond an accusation, so there was no way to evaluate his credibility or



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the basis of his knowledge.

Following current case law, the Florida court suppressed evidence of the gun, since the gun had been illegally seized. The Florida attorney general appealed the case, which eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court. There, the attorney general argued that there should be a "firearms exception" to the Fourth Amendment. Because guns are so dangerous, the attorney general reasoned, searches for them should not have to meet ordinary Fourth Amendment standards.

Writing for a unanimous Supreme Court, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg disagreed, noting how easy it would be to harass citizens if anonymous tips about guns could, by themselves, serve as the basis for a search.

In a 1968 case, *Terry* v. *Ohio*, the Supreme Court created a large Fourth Amendment loophole by allowing police officers to stop and search people who seemed to be acting in a suspicious manner. Although *Terry* was premised on the need for officer safety, in case the suspicious person were a criminal who might use a gun against the officer, the case became the foundation for dozens of new Fourth Amendment exceptions, usually in situations having little to do with police safety. Had the Florida attorney general prevailed in *Florida* v. *J.L.*, the case would have established the foundation for many more exceptions to the Fourth Amendment.

Although *J.L.* involved a search of a pedestrian, there would have been immediate pressure to apply the "firearms exception" to searches of automobiles, businesses, and homes. All over the country, prosecutors would have argued that Fourth Amendment protection should also be suspended when officers suspect that people possess other dangerous things, such as knives, brass knuckles, or drugs.

Since ordinary Fourth Amendment restrictions would not apply, mere assertions (rather than probable cause or reasonable suspicion) would have become the basis for searches, leaving everyone in jeopardy of being searched at whim.

The Supreme Court's swift and unanimous ruling may signal its unwillingness to let political hysteria over guns be used to weaken the Bill of Rights. If so, today's Court is wiser than the Court of the 1920's (when fear of communism was allowed to trump the First Amendment) or the 1980's (when the "drug war" was allowed to degenerate into a war on the Constitution).

Not since World War I has there been a Democratic President so aggressively hostile to the Bill of Rights, so it was not surprising that Clinton's solicitor general filed an amicus brief in favor of the "firearms exception."

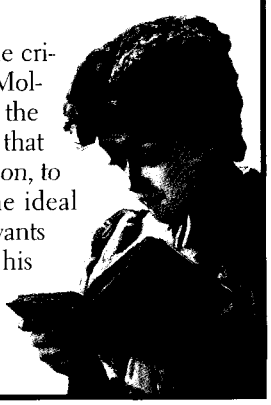
What was surprising, however, was the broad collection of amici who wrote in support of the Fourth Amendment. The American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers supplied amicus briefs, as they often do in Fourth Amendment cases. But so did the Rutherford Institute, which focuses mainly on freedom of religion. The National Rifle Association joined with the Independence Institute, in a brief I co-authored, to point out that the carrying of firearms is common and legal in most of the United States, and not inherently suspicious. Even the Southern Poverty Law Center, which has spent much of the past decade raising direct-mail revenue from credulous donors panicked about "militia terrorism," contributed an amicus brief.

Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform, has observed the growth of a coalition in which disparate groups come together to uphold the principle that government should leave people alone. Homeschoolers, gun owners, and hemp activists are realizing that protecting the lifestyles of people they don't like is the best way to ensure protection for their own lifestyle. *Florida* v. *J.L.* was a great victory for the Bill of Rights. As groups such as *J.L.*'s very diverse amici come to understand their common interest in protecting every single liberty set forth in the Bill of Rights, there will be more victories for the Constitution.

—*Dave Kopel*

## BOOK OF NEXT MONTH

Several important "conservative" writers have produced fine critiques of modern education, e.g., Albert Jay Nock, Thomas Molnar, and Russell Kirk, but few moderns on either side (with the exception of Rousseau) have offered a positive vision. For that reason, we are going *ad fontes* for our basic work on education, to Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, a work that describes the ideal preparation for an orator—that is, an educated man who wants to put his talents to public use. Quintilian's great virtue is his lack of originality. For the most part, he gives the common sense of the ancient world, and if we are to restore common sense to ours, we may have to go back 2,000 years.



**THE CHECHEN *BOYEVIKI*** ("warriors") are widening the war with Russia, dashing any hopes the Kremlin had of containing the conflict. On May 10, a group of 30 to 40 *boyeviki* practically wiped out an Internal Troops (MVD) convoy (killing 22 of 26 men) in the neighboring Ingush republic, embarrassing Moscow and sparking a war of words between the Russian military and Ingush President Ruslan Aushev, each blaming the other for the incident. Aushev claimed that the surprise attack was yet another indicator of the Russian military's incompetence, since it came just a few kilometers from the Chechen border and the convoy did not take even elementary security precautions. The military fired back by questioning Aushev's loyalty (the Ingush and Chechens are related peoples), inadvertently pointing out what most Russians already know: The Caucasian, mostly Muslim, republics sympathize with the Chechens and want Moscow to talk peace with Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov.

In fact, Duma deputy Pavel Krashennikov—probably with the Kremlin's blessing—had recently met with Maskhadov's representative in Ingushetia, leading some pundits to conclude that both Maskhadov and President Vladimir Putin were ready to negotiate and that somebody, most likely the more belligerent Chechen "field commanders," wanted to undercut peace talks. It is entirely possible, however, that hawks in the Russian military, warned by Russian intelligence for weeks of upcoming Chechen efforts to widen the war, deliberately kept their guard down, hoping for an attack.

Gennadi Troshev, Russia's commander of ground forces in Chechnya, has more than once declared that any talks with the Chechens would be "treason." Meanwhile, the military has been cashing in on its support for Putin during the



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recent presidential election: A slew of officers from the entourage of Troshev and Caucasian Military District commander Kazantsev have secured appointments to elite units serving in the Moscow Military District (MMD). In short, Putin is now surrounded by Chechen generals who could play a pivotal role in deciding the fate of Yeltsin's successor if the Kremlin does something they don't like—such as opening peace negotiations with the Chechens. Putin's mentor, Boris Yeltsin, stripped the army of men and equipment, weakened the MMD, transferred resources to the MVD, and boosted the elite Airborne Forces as his unofficial presidential guard. (Yeltsin was not known as a political survivor for nothing.) But Putin has transferred command of MVD units in the Caucasus to an army general and has not kept up the flow of extra pay and generous perks to the Airborne Forces.

Meanwhile, army commanders are increasingly insubordinate, rumors are mounting of a Bin Laden-brokered Islamist offensive in both the Caucasus and Central Asia this summer, and the Russian media are reporting airstrikes against rebel positions inside Ingushetia. What will happen next is anybody's guess, but one thing is clear: Putin, propelled into the presidency by both the oligarchs and the military/security apparatus, is not entirely in control of the Kremlin.

—*Denis Petrov*

"**False Christs** shall arise," warned our Lord, "insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Christians of any other era would apply this admonition to the Christ of CBS's *Jesus*, the April miniseries that captured a general endorsement from evangelicals and Catholics both here and abroad. On Italian television, the film received the highest ratings of any show this year. Here in the land of capitalism, the film has been accompanied by not one but *three* soundtracks, which include songs by both "secular" and "Christian" rock superstars, including Hootie & The Blowfish, D.C. Talk, and Leann Rimes.

Rimes has a breathy ballad dedicated to Jesus entitled, "I Need You"—no doubt an instant classic in churches with video monitors and "praise teams" who delight in Jesus-is-my-boyfriend choruses. But this should be of no surprise to anyone who has seen the miniseries. The Lamb of God is played by Jeremy Sisto, formerly of the hit movie *Clueless*. Save for a few key moments, such as when he is crucified, he can't seem to wipe the smarmy grin off his face. He performs miracles in a "Dude—I told you so" manner. He struggles to fight off the advances of both Mary of Bethany (?) and Mary Magdalene ("Grace" of NBC's celebration of sodomy, *Will and Grace*). Still shots of Sisto have him staring, hip-cocked, effeminate but macho, with his hair blowing in the wind. God elected the Man of Sorrows; CBS would rather he be sexy.

But this is the Jesus of American evangelicalism, not the invention of studio executives. Hollywood has simply answered the question, "Whom do men say that I am?" Evangelicals have made large profits for CBS on Sunday nights by devouring the fluffy gnosticism of *Touched by an Angel*. So it only made sense that a film about the life of Jesus, if endorsed by the right evangelical leaders, would be a formulaic success capable of blasting ABC's *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* and Fox's *Beverly Hills 90210* series finale out of the water.

It is easy to take shots at this film—the muddled Arianism, the altered details of the Gospels, the degenerate actors chosen to play Jesus, Mary, and Mary Magdalene. But American Christianity has become so market driven that it cannot see the glaring problems with this film; instead, it chooses to overlook them all, in the hope that, by being "all things to all men," they might "win some." Jeremy Sisto is simply every church's dream youth pastor. He shows us the playful side of the Judge of Heaven and Earth. He is, in the words of the Joan Osbourne song, "just a slob like one of us." But more than that, he gives pastors and priests a video to show to young people during youth hour. After all, catechisms and sermons are so *boring*.

All this points to a deeper problem associated with any "Jesus" movie: Salvation is "good news," and that news comes to us in words—words preached, and words (sacramentally) under water, wine, and bread. That news is of Christ crucified for our sins and raised for our salvation—not the "Christ" who came to "teach us how to love" (in the words of Mr. Sisto).

But many evangelicals will overlook major theological and moral *faux pas* (as well as terrible acting and a wretched script) because they see a good "Jesus" movie as a conversion tool—indeed, for some, the only effective conversion tool in our sensate age. Of course, the bait-and-switch technique usually stops with the bait, and converts to hip Christianity often quickly grow weary of this faddish, pseudo-religion. Serious Christians should challenge their ministers if they engage in these tactics, remembering that "he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

—*Aaron D. Wolf*

**Obiter Dicta:** The editorial staff of *Chronicles* is pleased to welcome our newest colleague, **Jeffrey Thomas Kuhner**, who joins us as assistant editor. Jeff, who hails from the Great White North (Montreal), has benefited greatly from the easing of immigration restrictions under NAFTA. A doctoral student in American History at Ohio University, Jeff is writing his dissertation on Robert A. Taft. (A portion of his research appeared in the June 1998 issue of *Chronicles*.) Jeff and his wife, **Grace**, live in Loves Park, Illinois, just over the border from Rockford. Any editorial errors in this issue are entirely his fault.

The poetry of **Constance Rowell Mastores** of Oakland, California, returns to our pages this month. Her poems have appeared in the *Lyric*, *Press*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Boulevard*, and *Artweek*, among others.

Our cover artist this month is **Vincent S. Chiaramonte** of Rockford, Illinois. A graduate of the American Academy of Art, Chiaramonte is an internationally recognized portrait artist whose subjects have included Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago. He holds signature memberships in the American Society of Portrait Artists, the Portrait Institute, and the Washington Society of Portrait Artists, among others. His artwork has recently been chosen to appear in *The Best of Pastels*, a book commemorating the Pastel Society of America's 25th anniversary.

Our interior art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.



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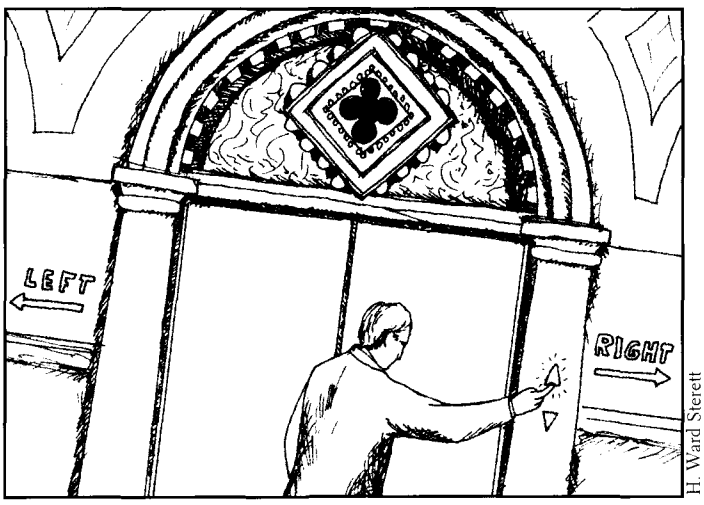


H. Ward Sterett

# Hoisting the Donkey

by Thomas Fleming

In troubled times, we look for something to hold on to as the dangerous currents are sweeping us downstream to destruction. Some will have the clear sight (or unthinking prejudice) to grab on to some rooted feature of the landscape—the limb of an oak tree, the steeple of a church, the arm of a brother; while others make the mistake of reaching for something more recent and showy—an ornamental bush, a golden arch, or the hand of a political ally. For stupid people, which means most of us, it makes all the difference whether a man in distress turns to the Gospels or to a grief counselor.

Even in the smog of politics, we thrash the air, searching for something solid and enduring, but the great mistake—in politics, as in most of life—is to mistake the familiar for the permanent. The world of the 1950's is gone for good, and with it the postwar alignment of states and parties. Those who take their stand on the platform of the Republican Party will soon be looking through its holes into the great vortex that is sucking them in, and those who try to keep in step with some imagined "conservative" movement (in what direction should conservatives want to *move*, except backward?) will ride their slow freight all the way off the cliff.

I touched upon these matters almost a year ago when I gave a speech in an ex-convent across the Adda River from the village where Lucia Mondella and Renzo Tramaglino were supposed to get married some 360 years ago. Those dim-witted Lombard lovers had a grasp of the permanent: love, faith, hard work, courage. Then, as now, there were unscrupulous oppressors as well as cowardly and faithless priests and nuns, but even the cowards knew the truth, not only in the 17th century, when these fictional characters were undergoing the perils of thwarted love, famine, plague, and war, but also in the 19th century, when Alessandro Manzoni was writing *I Promessi Sposi*.

And there I was, not five miles from Manzoni's home, 150 years later, lecturing an Italian audience on the themes of empire and oppression, not of the Spanish and Austrian subjugation of Lombardia, but of America in the Philippines and in Kosovo, an argument I had been making, it seemed, all over the world—in London and Paris, in Chicago and Berkeley, in Sydney and Adelaide. *"La fine del secolo Americano."*

When I gave my talk in the restored chapel, the one or two ex-Christian Democrats (Italy's Cold War "conservatives") were incensed. The moderator of the panel, a former ambassador to the United States, was furious and afterward exploded at me, insisting that all the lies he had heard about Racak and ethnic cleansing were true, that the American government would never be guilty of unprovoked aggression. When I told him that he and his government were as much victims of American lies as the American sheep who bleated in unison with the CNN broadcasts, this calm and benevolent diplomat started screaming, "I suppose the holocaust never happened either," and he stormed off waving papers in the air as if he were trying to flag down a taxi in the middle of an Italian garden.

Since most Italians are too realistic to be conservative, the talk was a great success. More than a few radicals came up to find out which section of left field I had come from, and they were not at all unhappy to learn that I came from the right. Those labels belonged to the past, they said, and in our subsequent conversation, the young leftists turned out to be more green than red, defenders of community and naive traditions, opposed to the expansion of government coercion in the name of rights.

In America, the smart money is buying puts on the current alignment of left and right, of performing mastodons and domesticated onagers. In Italy, where politics is a matter of jump-



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ing from one unresolved crisis to another, they are simultaneously transforming their electoral system and floundering around in a hopeless effort to find competent leaders. The communist government of Massimo D'Alema has been a total flop, and if many Italians once believed that the communists—whatever their faults—held out the promise of effective, honest government, they know better now. Their prime minister (who looks like an organ grinder dressed up for a funeral) has done nothing to save the Italian economy, much less the lira, and while a communist might have been expected to stand up to NATO, he caved in and allowed NATO's murderous airstrikes on Yugoslavia to be carried out from Italian bases, contenting himself with whining.

What is the result? An influx of Kosovo Albanian criminals who are robbing, raping, and murdering their way across central Italy. The Sicilian Mafia was like a pack of wolves, picking off weakened animals and resting when their bellies were full; the Albanians are more like piranhas who never seem to get enough. The Italian ministry of justice, commenting on the rash of robberies and murders, remarked that respect for human life is not part of the Albanian mentality.

Most Americans do not want to know that recent immigrants are far more likely to commit violent crimes than native-born Americans, but Italians must not watch as much television. A recent European poll revealed that Italians were more concerned about immigration than the citizens of any other country. What was their primary concern? Not the loss of jobs or their national identity, but the loss of their lives. In fact, almost half of all Italians believe that their lives and safety are threatened by immigrants.

In the past few years, the only major party to make immigration an issue was the Lega Nord. In recent months, however, Umberto Bossi has made another rapprochement with Silvio Berlusconi, the media/investment magnate who started Forza Italia. The last coalition that joined the Lega with Forza Italia and Berlusconi's right flank, the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale, ended in a debacle when Bossi and the Lega voted against their own government. Bossi's "ribaltone" enabled the "ex"-communists to come to power, and in the intervening years, the Lega has more than implied, on many occasions, that Berlusconi is connected with the Mafia.

In a bold political move, Berlusconi has decided to adopt his once-and-future partner's position on immigration, and the three parties have proposed fairly radical immigration reform legislation. Despite the technical language and gestures of concession (more aid for refugees, an automatic citizenship plan for immigrants who have been legal residents for ten years), the proposed law would represent a revolution in the Italian post-fascist mindset.

In a country where patriotism is a thoughtcrime, nothing could be more radical than an immigration reform proposal that recognizes Italy's right to exist and to control its own destiny. Article three, for example, stipulates that, twice a year, the regions of Italy will define the numerical limits and types of employment needs, and on that basis, the country's openness to immigrants will be determined. Article 11 provides for the expulsion of aliens who enter illegally, exceed the term of their permit, or constitute a threat to public order and safety. That last clause is clearly meant to address the growing problem of Albanian immigrants, who have displaced the Sicilian Mafia, in much of the peninsula, as the masters of drugs, prostitution, extortion, and violent crime.

The reaction of the Italian press lords has been predictably dishonest, and Berlusconi is being compared with Le Pen, Haider, Hitler, and any other villain that their limited imagination can conceive. On April 3, *La Stampa* (the Italian *Wall Street Journal*) led off with a predictable hissy fit: "The immigration proposal is superfluous and in contrast with the center-right's basic values, particularly the free market, unity of the family . . . *e cosi via*." Giampaola Pansa of *L'Espresso*, in his column "*Adesso mi arrabio*" ("Now I'm mad"), concedes that there may be too many illegal immigrants in Italy, but does not dissent from the official opinion: "*È stato detto, giustamente, che è folle, antidemocratica, antieuropea, razzista, simil-Heider, regressivo in senso culturale e storico, inchiodata sul concetto superato di nazione etnica*" ("nailed onto the outmoded concept of the ethnic nation") and so on and so forth—why bother to translate? We know the tune all too well.

In a country where patriotism is a thoughtcrime, nothing could be more radical than an immigration reform proposal that recognizes Italy's right to exist and to control its own destiny.

Americans sometimes think theirs is the only "nation of immigrants" beset by ethnic conflicts and bound together by the flimsy cords of a national ideology. According to our official propaganda, America is a nation "dedicated to the proposition"; according to their official propaganda, the varied regions and cultures of Italy were unified in the *Risorgimento*, a glorious uprising that unified Italy and culminated (after a few disgraceful decades in the middle of the 20th century) in a universal nation more or less like the United States.

Italy's Great Lie is taught in schools, but even a casual visitor can smell the difference between the real Italy of farming villages and small workshops and the massive industrial projects that have polluted the air and water and turned much of Northern Italy into a down-market replica of Cleveland. Even by American standards, Italian "democratic" politicians of the left and right are a pack of strutting clowns who strike attitudes for the television cameras, fill their own pockets, and—at their best—do nothing.

I saw a microcosm of the Italian miracle in early June. I was asked to go to the village of Consonno (about ten miles from Lecco) and to evaluate its possible use as a site for foreign students. I had driven this way before, climbing up the steep hills that rise above the Adda River from Olginate to Garlate to Galbiate toward Colle in Brianza, leaving behind the crowded streets and pestilent motos and finding the ancient farms and pastures where some part of the real Italy is preserved.

The day was hot and humid, but as we rose above the smog, I could forget the endless traffic jam that Lombardia has be-



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come and the unending verbal battles between the phony right and the phony left. The woods were thick with chestnut trees, and in their shade, the locals could pick the *funghi* that grew in abundance—porcini, boletus, and others whose names I had not so much as heard.

The shock was Consonno itself. Sometime in the 1960's, the city fathers of Olginate had decided to construct a model town complete with hotel, disco, and shops. This little commercial community was constructed in the best nightmare Moorish style, complete with a tower that looked something like a minaret designed by Disney.

The place flopped immediately; the shops closed; and the young people who had not gone to the disco came on weekends to trash the place—not that it could have been made worse. Everything had been built of such shoddy construction that, after only 30 years, the sidewalks looked like an earthquake had hit. Only a mile or two away, you could find farm buildings and churches that had lasted for centuries. This tribute to America had not survived the end of the Cold War.

We were taken to Consonno by our old friend Elvio Conti, one of the four founders of the Lega Lombarda. Elvio's mother had been born there, and her parents were buried in the small cemetery which we could not enter because the city fathers of Olginate had decided—contrary to tradition and probably against the law—to keep it padlocked. Elvio is a sound businessman who believes in the free market, but he wonders why his mother's village had to be ruined, why the entire area had to be flooded with welfare cases from the South, and why all of Italy has to be transformed into a hybrid of Albania and North Africa whose fitting symbol is the commercial minaret of Consonno.

I tell the story of Consonno to friends at dinner, and Eugenio Corti informs me that Consonno is proverbial for being a village of idiots and retells the story (which exists in many languages) of the villagers who wanted to feed a hungry donkey. When they find some grass growing out of the bell tower, instead of pulling up the grass and taking it to the donkey in the piazza, they put a rope around the donkey's neck and hoist him to the top of the campanile. Seeing the death rictus on the animal's face, they exclaim: "See how happy he is to have the grass." Later, an outsider comments that the dead donkey was the only creature in Consonno that had any sense.

All of Italy is Consonno now, and, confronted with Third World poverty, instead of doing the sensible thing—which is sending the grass to Tunisia or Albania—they are bringing the Tunisians and Albanians to their own campanile. This time, it is not going to be the donkey that perishes, but Italy.

Like most people, Italians are hypocrites who like to attack the United States for its "racist" immigration policies, but when the time came to ship the Albanians back where they came from several years ago, most Italians breathed a sigh of relief. This bold initiative of the Polo-Lega alliance may be the first step toward the creation of a genuine rightist political coalition in Italy, one that will transcend Berlusconi's puerile fascination with American consumerism and the German electoral system.

Nearly ten years ago, the alliance of Bossi, Berlusconi, and Fini offered hope to millions of Italians who wanted a decent government and a decentralized constitution. For reasons known only to himself, Umberto Bossi destroyed that coalition. After nearly ten years of Marxist misrule, Bossi seems to know who the enemies are. Let us hope the Italian people have learned the same lesson. c

## DICTATIONS

### *Lightening Up*

"Two D's on your report card? What have you been doing all semester? From now on, you are a student: no phone, no friends, no dates. . . . It's time you started growing up, started accepting responsibility."

"Yeah, Dad, *whatever*."

It's the familiar conclusion to many conversations here in America: One side appeals to standards of excellence, traditions of morality, a code of behavior; the other asserts the right to lump all of the above into the category of "whatever." Complain about the expression to one of your loutish children or one of their aunts and uncles who try to keep up with the times, and you'll be told, "Lighten up, it's only an expression, a little slang."

"Lighten up" is another one of those conversation finishers that dismiss every serious enterprise or intention as a relic of Victorianism. I'm almost certain that when the mother of one of his victims vented her rage at the trial, Jeffrey Dahmer must have been thinking, "Lighten up."

But are these expressions really slang? Traditionally (pardon the expression), slang is a racy form of everyday speech, used either as a secret language to confuse the authorities or simply for the mere joy of creating vivid expressions. There must be some other way of describing a worn-out cliché whose only function is to deaden speech and end conversation.

Yeah right, whatever, lighten up, chill out, take a pill, get real. What do they mean by "real"? Apparently, only the most basic physical functions we share with other mammals: eating, copulating, and playing games. Reality, apparently, does not include writing a sonnet or learning Mandarin Chinese.

There has been much talk of the "dumbing down of America," mostly by the victims of the process, but dumbing down is only a part of the larger process of proletarianization, the reduction of all human life to the level of a deracinated, denatured employee whose perceptions and character have been stunted by pop culture. To be a "teen"—at least since the 1940's—has meant being the slave of a commercial culture that has dumbed the human character to a level lower than our nearest relatives on the *scala naturae*. Being stupid and servile—being a tool—is then equated with being really free, free from the burden of being human. What is the answer?

"Get a life."

But I have a life of sorts, of the muddled old-fashioned human variety. This pop-prole life, reality, chilled-out enlightenment is something else, as different from life as soft ice cream from *gelato*.

—*Humpty Dumpty*



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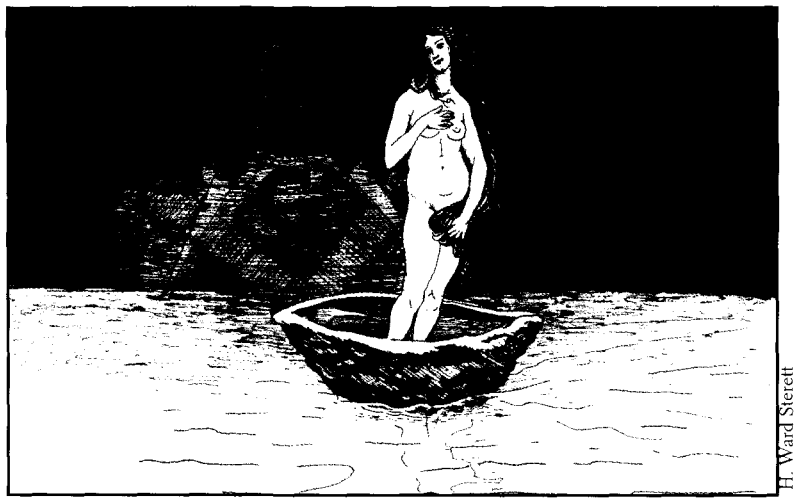
# Birth of a Non-Nation

## Italian History as Not Told in the Textbooks

**by Maurizio Blondet**



H. Ward Sterett

In the United States, liberation from foreign domination and liberation from the past (the republican and democratic features of government) were largely the result of the American Revolution, which was spontaneous in origin, successful, moderate in its outcome, and—above all—supported by a considerable part of the population. This fortunate historical experience may lead many Americans to view the unification of Italy as if it were a replica of their own revolution. They see in the *Risorgimento* the spontaneous uprising of the people for their own independence. They mistake Giuseppe Mazzini for a George Washington in miniature; they imagine Giuseppe Garibaldi as a cross between Davy Crockett and Simón Bolívar.

The mistaken parallel is an act of generosity. In Europe, connection with the past—and with ancient political orders (both pre-democratic and pre-republican)—is much more complex and nuanced. For many Europeans, liberation from the past was not something to be desired. They had to be violently detached from their kings, their nobles, and their popes through the actions of extremist minorities.

The revolutions in Europe from 1789 to 1917 were a single, continuous phenomenon: a unitary process of overturning ancient norms, hierarchies, and loyalties. In one particular stage, the revolution used nationalism as part of its program to destroy the old social order. This was the context for the national unification of Italy and of other smaller countries.

At the Congress of Vienna (1815), the heads of the three imperial states that had defeated Napoleon restored an order based on the alliance between throne and altar. The Catholic empire was Habsburg Austria; the Orthodox empire was czarist Russia; and the Lutheran empire was the Kaiser's Prussia. At the margin of Europe was the Muslim empire, with its capital in Istanbul—the Ottoman Empire. The four empires maintained good relations with each other for almost a century (down to 1914) and consolidated a European unity of a conservative, anti-revolutionary stamp.

Americans may have been taught that the three European empires were equally obscurantist and repressive. In reality, some of them were more liberal than others. The Kaiser's empire was a "system of command and obedience" on the model of the Prussian military, but the Prussian government corresponded to the Germanic psyche, with its deep aspiration to organic and communitarian society. The czar's empire was a mystical autocracy because "civil society" and a system of rights were unknown in Russia. There were, however, efforts to create a legal order in Russia, although they were continually interrupted by attempted coups and terrorist acts which forced the government into repressive measures, arbitrary arrests, and the use of the secret police.

The Habsburg Empire was the most open and liberal. It included diverse languages and nationalities—from the Hungarians to the Northern Italians, from the Slovenes to the Croats to the Czechs. All chose their own representatives at the parliament in Vienna. The constituent nations enjoyed considerable autonomy and were often bound together by nothing more than the crown of Austria. There was free speech and a free press. There was religious liberty. (Vienna, for example, had a flourishing and cultivated Jewish community.) The various nationalities had the freedom to use their national language even in parliament. The Habsburg administration was honest and effective, and the people of the Veneto, the Italians closest to the Austrian Empire, are still nostalgic for it.

The Habsburg Empire was, in sum, a government of laws, without the limitations that existed in Prussia or under the czar. But the Habsburg regime's openness and pluralism—and the

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*Maurizio Blondet is a correspondent for* Avvenire. *This article is adapted from his speech at The Rockford Institute's conference on the rise (and fall) of Italy and the United States.*



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lack of arbitrary authority—made it easy prey for revolution. The empire was supranational, multiethnic, and multiracial. In order to destroy it, the revolutionary forces ignited nationalist passions, which were lying dormant under the Austrian crown, fostering separatism, secession, and ultimately disintegration.

After 1814, murky forces attempted to create a nationalist state of mind in the various populations of Europe. Because these forces adopted the rule of secrecy, they are hard to document, although they would come to be known as "Masonry."

There were those who were able to identify, in all this nationalist fervor, a European disease. Franz Grillparzer, an Austrian writer, prophesied that humanity would be carried, by means of nationality, all the way to bestiality: an acute prognosis that would be fulfilled in Nazism, in the ideology of biological purity as the only political value.

The awareness of a common Italian identity, notwithstanding the division of Italy into a dozen small states, was very old. Dante and Machiavelli had fought for political unification of the peninsula; not, however, as an expression of a national-biological-linguistic vision but with reference to the Roman Empire. Italy, they argued, had to reconquer her spiritual inheritance. Italians, who had been reduced to a collection of nameless peoples under foreign domination, had to regain their pride and the virtues of *Romanitas*. They had to make themselves the center of a higher political order that would restore the civil, legal, and cultural unity of the Roman Empire which had unified and civilized Europe.

These were cultural, even literary aspirations, which had made little progress toward realization. The "new patriotism" that gave birth to the *Risorgimento* and to the unity of Italy under the monarchy of Piedmont and Savoy was of a completely different type.

The creator of this new climate was Giuseppe Mazzini. A tireless agitator and conspirator, Mazzini succeeded in inspiring a collective state of mind in the Italian educated classes. In Mazzini's view, the unification of Italy was bound up with a pronounced hostility toward the Catholic Church, which was seen as an "obscurantist and reactionary" obstacle to "the nation." The Italy of the future, Mazzini proclaimed, was to be republican, with no more kings and popes. Revolutionary nationalism was to be aroused with assassination attempts, acts of terrorism, and insurrections by "enlightened" minorities.

The specifically anti-Catholic flavor of Mazzini's "patriotism" and its derivation from the French Revolution made it an object of hatred to the great majority of the Italian population. The lower classes—essentially peasants—were strongly Catholic and attached to their local sovereigns: to the pope in the Papal States, to the House of Bourbon in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. They opposed, with scythes and pitchforks, Napoleon's troops, who brought the "*liberté*" of the French Revolution, which turned out to mean the looting and seizure of their poor farms.

Italian cultural unity was foreign to this agrarian element of the population: They spoke local dialects and barely understood the dialect of Florence used by Dante and Machiavelli, which only a small educated elite learned. Linguistic unity was realized, to some extent, only under fascism, and later, definitively, by television, which introduced a standard Italian on the lowest level.

Mazzini was aware that the common people would never be drawn to his extremist nationalism. From the beginning, he dedicated himself to preparing a revolutionary minority of students, young officers, members of the middle class, and intellectuals who would drag the passive—or downright hostile—masses toward the future. To this end, he founded a secret nationalist society, the *Carbonari*, confederating numerous preexistent Masonic lodges and modifying their ideology in a "patriotic" direction. Then he organized "Young Italy," a second center of clandestine conspiracy which was to be the model for the nationalist movements of other countries.

Mazzini enjoyed discreet but powerful international support, and he operated as a prominent member of a global network. A personal friend and correspondent of Albert Pike, the founder of American Masonry, Mazzini lived a great part of his life in London, where he took shelter every time the authorities of the Italian states were searching for him. London's Masonic mother lodge protected him and provided him access to the mansions of the British aristocracy.

In British imperialist circles, Mazzini may have been seen as a useful tool for reducing Habsburg hegemony over the Italian states or for exercising British influence over Italy. It is certain that Mazzini the fugitive was always supplied with passports and papers.

Since there were no photographs at that time, he used the passport of his personal friend Rabbi Morales of Livorno, a leading member of a Jewish community that had close business ties with the British world. Mazzini's mistress was also a leader in the Jewish wing of a movement that was anti-Catholic and "patriotic." Her son, Ernesto Nathan, a Masonic grandmaster, would become the first mayor of Rome when it was "liberated" from the papacy and united by force to Italy.

In 1821, the network of agitators provoked a series of insurrections throughout Europe, from Spain to Greece. In Southern Italy, a putsch of progressive officers forced the king to adopt a liberal (that is, Jacobin-Napoleonic) constitution. Almost immediately, the people of Sicily rose up against the new government; the liberals had recourse to more ruthless military repression and soon found themselves fighting a civil war that split them into two camps within a few weeks. In Piedmont, students, intellectuals, and young officers (members of Young Italy) demanded that the king and the House of Savoy enter into immediate conflict with Austria in order to seize Lombardy and Veneto.

The little kingdom of Piedmont was the Italian Prussia, ruled by a military monarchy. However, the ruling family saw that, by adopting the progressivism of the Mazzinian nationalists, they had an opportunity for territorial conquests: at first, only Lombardy and Veneto; but over the years, their ambition extended to the entire peninsula. From that point on, Piedmont began to put itself at the service of the "Italian cause," providing it with its military organization.

In 1848, in a vast and well-coordinated operation, "spontaneous" insurrections exploded simultaneously in Paris, Palermo, and Milan. Even in Berlin and Vienna, street violence broke out—not, of course, with demands for national independence but with subversive intent.

Mazzini himself led the insurrection in Rome against the pope, who was driven into flight. The conspirators proclaimed a socialist, anticlerical, and Jacobin republic (the *Repubblica Romana*). A coup staged by upper-middle-class and progressive intellectuals expelled the Bourbon king from Naples and proclaimed a Mazzinian republic (*Repubblica Partenopea*). After the republic closed the churches and confiscated church prop-



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erty, the immediate revolt of the poorer classes—in whose name the progressives had taken power—put it in difficulty. Calabria revolted under the leadership of Cardinal Ruffo, and the rebels undertook the armed reconquest of the capital, converging on Naples with bands of peasant volunteers. In the end, the little people had the best of it: The republicans were lynched and hanged along the streets.

Not long afterward, the *Repubblica Romana* also fell, besieged by Austrian and French troops sent in to support the pope, the legitimate sovereign. Mazzini and Garibaldi, the heart and soul of the revolution, took to their heels. Even in Rome, the population had remained largely hostile to the Jacobin-Mazzinian government.

The 1848 uprising in Vienna endangered the center of the Catholic empire. Metternich had to flee the city. But in Italy, and also in Berlin, the army remained almost unanimously faithful—not only the generals and officers (for the most part Austrian), but even the common soldiers, often Croats, Slovenes, and North Italians. (Not one of the Italians enrolled in the Austrian army refused to march against the insurgents.) The king of Piedmont risked a military offensive in support of the Milan uprising. The Austrian General Joseph Radetzky easily defeated him and eventually smothered the revolt.

Order was also reestablished in Vienna. In Milan, the common people shouted to Radetzky, "*Sun staa i sciuri!*" (which, in the Milanese dialect, means, "It was the aristocrats who did it!"). The suppression of the insurrection was followed by trials and repression. The expanded Austrian police force wielded its power against the common people. For the first time, the man in the street in Milan realized that he was being governed by a foreign power. The hatred was directed not so much against the Austrians as against the "*crucchi*" (the name they gave the Croats, who called bread "*kruh*," and who, with the Bosnians, were the most faithful elements of the imperial Austrian infantry).

Meanwhile, the Kingdom of Piedmont undertook a vigorous rearmament. A special group of assault troops, the *Bersaglieri*, was reorganized as a military-ideological corps with Masonic generals and soldiers selected for their anticlericalism. Piedmont secured the diplomatic support of England and, more importantly, an alliance with France.

French troops, united with the Piedmontese, unleashed war against Austria in 1859, conquering Milan, Lombardy, and Veneto. An expeditionary force composed of volunteers sailed from Ligurian ports (belonging to Piedmont) to conquer the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, led by Giuseppe Garibaldi. Blond (a rarity in Italy), a fanatical Mazzinian republican, an adventurer famous for his exploits in South America (where he had learned guerrilla tactics), Garibaldi was the only one of the progressives and nationalists who entered into the popular imagination. Piedmontese propaganda and the international Masonic press inflated his heroic qualities. As a result, Garibaldi has passed into history as the Italian Simón Bolívar.

The Garibaldian expedition was supported by the British fleet, which covered the landing of his volunteers (dressed in red shirts, the color of socialism) at Palermo. The Sicilians gave a warm reception to the "Garibaldini"; relying on Garibaldi's promise of autonomy for Sicily, they rose up to support him against the king of Naples. The unification of Italy was sealed at the Southern village of Teano, where Garibaldi consigned to Victor Emmanuel the recently conquered South.

For decades thereafter, the *Bersaglieri* and Garibaldi's irregulars had to put down the anti-nationalist revolt in the South. In this "struggle against banditry" (in the words of Piedmontese propaganda) the South was bled dry. One of the most developed regions of the peninsula became the poor and dependent South we know today.

The unification of Italy was made against the will of the majority of the Italian people. I state this not in a spirit of contradiction or by way of provocation, but to let my American friends understand the reason behind the political instability in Italy, which strikes foreigners as astonishing and sometimes comical. Italy today is a vital society of people who are trying to live by escaping the attention of the state's policemen and tax collectors, whom they do not regard as their own.

The unification of Italians became a reality only later, in the period between 1916 and 1918, when Italy entered the Great War. Millions of poor Italians, who had until then lacked the right to vote, found themselves together in the trenches. Sardinian shepherds and Sicilian peasants, Piedmontese factory workers, farmers from the Romagna and clerks in Milan—all were made brothers in the bloodiest massacre in history.

Those who came back from the war went on to swell the ranks of fascist sympathizers. Ex-combatants gave their support, *en masse*, to the fascist movement that, after the Great War, confronted the uprisings staged by the latest incarnation of Jacobinism: the Communist Party under Soviet control.

The first fascist activists were called "blackshirts" because they were veterans of the commando corps which, during the war, had carried out operations at night beyond the lines. They were skilled workers: railroad men, telegraphers, a technological elite in a backward country. They were both nationalists and leftists. They rejected communism because it was anti-Italian, but they were part of the working class, interested in questions of social justice.

Fascism was not a reactionary movement. It was not a generals' coup, *à lá* Pinochet, but a mass movement supported by millions of peasants and workers. Fascism succeeded in involving the Italian masses in the construction of the national state. It was not a democracy, but a caesarism of the people, and it was very popular.

Italy's defeat in World War II interrupted the process of nationalization. It was a defeat that brought shame. Italy, allied with Germany, dethroned Mussolini and declared itself an ally of the English and Americans who had already occupied Sicily. A fierce civil war was the result, with thousands dead. In Milan alone, between the defeat of the fascist regime and the entrance of American troops, communist partisans killed 35,000 civilians suspected of fascist sympathies—in just a few days.

The general confidence in the capacity for a unitary nation collapsed forever. Today in Italy, to be "patriotic" is equivalent to being declared a "fascist" and therefore a criminal, politically incorrect, beyond the pale of civilization. It is the only country in the world where love of country is a crime. We are the seventh-largest economy in the world, and yet we are a political midget; a military nonentity, with a government always in crisis; an unreliable ally for the Western alliance. Italy is a lively society, but without national solidarity. Every important question provokes division instead of cohesion, and civil war seems always on the point of breaking out. No agreements can be made with anyone. Our official national history is a lie. Behold Italy: a society that does not manage to be a nation.

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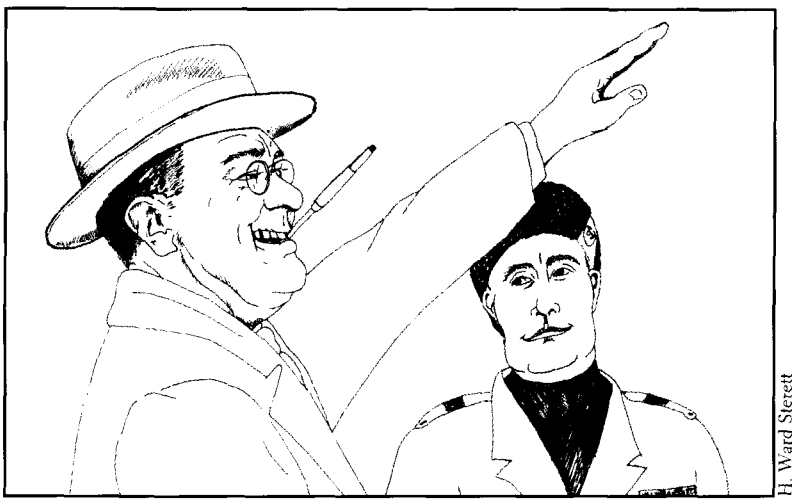
# FDR and Mussolini

## A Tale of Two Fascists

**by Srdja Trifkovic**




Many Americans would be horrified at the thought of discussing Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Benito Mussolini as anything but moral and political antipodes: democrat versus dictator, peacemaker versus aggressive bully, good versus bad. Fifty-five years of bipartisan hagiography have placed FDR in the pantheon of American saints, roughly at number two between Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy, and way ahead of the slaveholding Founding Fathers. It is not surprising that he is a role model to a liberal establishment that also reveres "Dr." King and John Brown. But the fact that Republicans such as Newt Gingrich also invoke Roosevelt as a role model indicates the extent to which his legacy is unthinkingly accepted across the political spectrum.

Genuine conservatives, on the other hand, may argue that FDR and Mussolini were in fact rather similar. They will point out both men's obsessive focus on strong, centralized government structures, their demagoguery, and especially their attempt to overcome the dynamics of social and economic conflict through the institutions of the corporate state.

For all their apparent similarities, however, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a more deleterious figure than Benito Mussolini, and his legacy proved to be more damaging to America than Il Duce's was to Italy. This is not a case of good versus bad, or of two equal evils, but of bad versus even worse: Roosevelt was a more efficient, and certainly more successful, fascist than Mussolini.

Although he seemed to be a prime candidate for Bolshevism, and in fact became a leading socialist agitator and journalist in the years prior to the Great War, there was no hard ideological core to Mussolini—except, ultimately, his nationalism. This core loyalty prompted him to reject the socialists' internationalism, pacifism, and neutrality at the beginning of the war in 1914 and to join other nationalists in demanding Italy's entry into the war. About to be expelled from the Socialist Party for belligerence, he defiantly declared: "My cry is a word that I would never have pronounced in normal times, and that today I raise loudly, with my full voice, with no attempt at simulation, with a firm faith, a fearful and fascinating word: WAR!"

It was all there: the passion, the theater, the martial bravado, the burning heart. His parting shot, before being drafted, was the birth cry of fascism: "Now that steel has met steel, one single cry comes from our hearts: *Viva l'Italia*!" By early 1918, as a wounded veteran and the influential editor of the anti-socialist *Popolo d'Italia*, Mussolini exclaimed: "We, the survivors, we who have returned, demand the right of governing Italy!" As a wave of revolutionary aftershocks swept across Europe following the Bolshevik coup in Russia, Mussolini was increasingly seen as a Man of Destiny who could fit his own demand for a dictator "ruthless and energetic enough to make a clean sweep."

A "clean sweep" against what? Against the establishment, the mediocre middle-class, middle-of-the-road liberals and democrats, the political heirs to the *Risorgimento*, long devoid of moral fiber and convictions, who allowed Italy's "victory" against Austria to be "mutilated" when Dalmatia went to the newly created Yugoslavia at Versailles. But also against the left, whose instincts and whose frame of mind none understand so intimately, and none can hate so passionately, as its former initiates.

In early 1919, Mussolini started turning his rhetoric into political action by creating the nucleus of a party in Milan. It consisted of disillusioned war veterans, republicans, and former socialists and anarchists. Mussolini called his force *Fasci di Combattimento*, invoking a symbol of ancient Roman togetherness and authority. At rallies, surrounded by fascist supporters wearing the black shirts that had been adopted originally by an-

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archists, Mussolini caught the Italians' collective imagination. His physique was impressive, his style of oratory superb, his attitudes highly theatrical. His ideas were contradictory, his facts often wrong, but his words were dramatic and his metaphors so apt and striking that he captivated the crowds.

Fascism grew and provided an antidote to the looming threat of Bolshevism, but by its abandonment of traditional codes of behavior in the struggle against socialism it came close to its red opponent, using not only its ideas of social justice and its vocabulary of simplified clichés but also its social base. The ecstatic Naples crowd that responded to Mussolini's threat to march on Rome in 1922 with the chant of "*Roma, Roma, Roma*" was largely proletarian.

The die was cast a week later when fascist militias advanced upon the Eternal City. The biggest gamble of Mussolini's career paid off when the liberal-democratic government collapsed and King Victor Emmanuel III sent the longed-for telegram. But the ease with which Mussolini took power reflected the weakness of the liberal system rather than his own strength. There was no real "march on Rome": The city was there for the taking.

The rise of Mussolini was welcomed by many Italians not because of the ideological appeal of fascism—still vaguely defined at the time—but because it seemed to offer practical solutions to two specific problems: the "red menace" at home and the "mutilated victory" abroad. From the outset, Italy's international status was perceived as the criterion by which the fascist experiment would stand or fall. Mussolini freely acknowledged this, but his activist foreign policy reflected a faulty grasp of foreign affairs that went beyond impatience with the old diplomacy. He confused strategy and policy. His emphasis on "action" conflated ends and means in semantic imprecision until the means, the acquisition of strength, became an end in itself. When the rhetoric of the regime became identified with a statement of ends, Italian policy became the prisoner of that rhetoric.

This became obvious in 1935 with the stupid and unnecessary Ethiopian adventure, which reflected Mussolini's vanity and his lack of true statesmanship. Italy's alliance with Germany was made possible, and in a sense unavoidable, by the Abyssinian war. This affair preoccupied the Western powers and Italy for more than a year, and it helped conceal the nature of the real threat to peace in Europe. Unwittingly, Mussolini did a favor to Hitler by drawing attention away from him. In the end, the split between Italy and her former allies could not be repaired—and Hitler was the beneficiary. The withdrawal of Germany and Italy from the League of Nations marked the final abandonment of the Europe of Versailles. Not only was the style of Italian foreign policy changed, but its substance as well, which was reflected in Mussolini's (not Hitler's) coining of the term "Rome-Berlin Axis." The Spanish civil war infused an ideological element into the picture. By pitting Germany and Italy against the left and against the Western democracies, it created an impression of ideological solidarity.

The presumed strategic community of interests between Italy and Germany remained unclarified, and this ambiguity had sweeping consequences in later years. Mussolini was prepared to fight to secure a resurrected Mediterranean Roman Empire and gain access to the oceans; Hitler ultimately strove for nothing short of *Weltmacht*. Italy's aims were "rational" and limited, but in their pursuit Mussolini was erratic and inconsistent. He eventually limited his options to the point where he had to make an alliance with the infinitely stronger German dictator, whose goals were unlimited—and therefore irrational—but who displayed great skill and "rationality" in their execution.

This was Italy's calamity and Mussolini's personal doom. He did not trust Hitler (as his frequent outbursts to his foreign minister and son-in-law Galeazzo Ciano amply testify), but he allowed himself to be bullied and cajoled into obedience time and again. Mussolini's greatest failure as a statesman and as an Italian was his abandonment of autonomy to Hitler. He entered a war he could never win, and he did so for eminently unfascist reasons, afraid that the spoils would be Germany's alone. Even if Hitler had been successful, Italy would have existed on Germany's sufferance, not on its own strength.

With his senseless, infantile dream of imperial glory—on which he finally parted company with his hitherto supportive subjects—Mussolini painted himself into a corner. The only exit was into German captivity—in Otto Skorzeny's plane in the summer of 1943, and into that retreating *Wehrmacht* column in the spring of 1945, from which he was taken to a communist firing squad and the Milanese meat hook. But for his dreams of imperial expansion, Il Duce, Italy's man of destiny, could have remained a hero at home and abroad until his death.

Until Abyssinia, Mussolini was hailed as a genius and a superman on both sides of the Atlantic, primarily because of his economic and social policies. When FDR was inaugurated in March 1933, the world was praising Mussolini's success in avoiding the Great Depression. Roosevelt and his "Brain Trust," the architects of the New Deal, were fascinated by Italy's fascism—a term which was not pejorative at the time. In America, it was seen as a form of economic nationalism built around consensus planning by the established elites in government, business, and labor.

American leaders were not very concerned with the undemocratic character of Mussolini's regime. Fascism had "effectively stifled hostile elements in restricting the right of free assembly, in abolishing freedom of the press and in having at its command a large military organization," the U.S. Embassy in Rome reported in 1925. But Mussolini remained a "moderate," confronting the Bolsheviks while fending off extremists on the right. Ambassador Henry Fletcher saw only a choice between Mussolini and socialism, and the Italian people preferred fascist "peace and prosperity" to the "free speech and loose administration" that risked bringing Bolshevism to power. Secretary of State Frank Kellogg joined Fletcher in labeling all opposition groups as "communists, socialists, and anarchists." The chief of the State Department's Western European Division, William Castle, declared in 1926 that "the methods of the Duce are not by any means American methods," but "methods which would certainly not appeal to this country might easily appeal to a people so differently constituted as are the Italians."

As the political and social effects of the Great Depression hit Europe, Italy received mounting praise as a bastion of order and stability. "The wops are unwopping themselves," *Fortune* magazine noted with awe in 1934. State Department roving Ambassador Norman Davis praised the successes of Italy in remarks before the Council on Foreign Relations in 1933, speaking after the Italian ambassador had drawn applause from his distinguished audience for his description of how Italy had put its "own house in order . . . A class war was put down." Roosevelt's



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ambassador to Italy, Breckenridge Long, was also full of enthusiasm for the "new experiment in government" which "works most successfully." Henry Stimson (secretary of state under Hoover, secretary of war under Roosevelt) recalled that he and Hoover had found Mussolini to be "a sound and useful leader." Roosevelt shared many of these positive views of "that admirable Italian gentleman," as he termed Mussolini in 1933.

The most radical aspect of the New Deal was the National Industrial Recovery Act, passed in June 1933, which set up the National Recovery Administration. Most industries were forced into cartels. Codes that regulated prices and terms of sale transformed much of the American economy. The industrial and agricultural life of the country was to be organized by government into vast farm and industrial cartels. This was corporatism, the essence of fascism.

It may be argued that Roosevelt simply did what seemed politically expedient. But contemporaries knew what was in the making. Some liked it: Charles Beard freely admitted that "FDR accepts the inexorable collectivism of the American economy . . . national planning in industry, business, agriculture and government." But detractors existed even within his own party. Democratic Sen. Carter Glass of Virginia denounced the NRA as "the utterly dangerous effort of the federal government at Washington to transplant Hitlerism to every corner of this nation."

FDR's New Deal united communists and fascists. Union leader Sidney Hillman praised Lenin as "one of the few great men that the human race has produced, one of the greatest statesmen of our age and perhaps of all ages." Big-business partisan Gen. Hugh Johnson wanted America to imitate the "dynamic pragmatism" of Mussolini. Together, Hillman and Johnson developed the National Labor Relations Board. They shared a collectivist and authoritarian aversion for historical American principles of liberty.

Like fascist and communist dictators, Roosevelt relied on his own charisma, carefully and deceitfully developed, and the executive power of his office to stroke the electorate into compliance and to bludgeon his critics. His welfare projects went far beyond aid to the poor and wound up bribing whole sectors of American society—farmers, businessmen, banks, intellectuals—into dependence on him and the state he created. Through subsidies, wrote Richard Hofstadter, "a generation of artists and intellectuals became wedded to the New Deal and devoted to Rooseveltian liberalism." Their corrupted descendants still thrive through federal endowments for the arts and humanities and in politically correct, federally funded academia. The only practical difference between FDR and fascist dictators was that he was far less successful in resolving the economic crisis. He made the Depression worse and even prolonged it. When he was elected, there were 11.6 million unemployed; seven years later, there were still 11.3 million out of work. In 1932, there were 16.6 million on relief; in 1939, there were 19.6 million. Only the war eventually ended the depression.

Ah, the war. During the campaign of 1940, FDR repeatedly promised to keep the country out of war and then did everything in his power to push America into the mayhem. In March 1941, he rammed the Lend-Lease Act through Congress, although selling munitions to belligerents and conveying them were acts of war and contrary to international law. During the Atlantic conference, FDR entered into an illegal and unconstitutional agreement with Churchill that America would go to war if Japan attacked British territory in the Far East. He said, "I may never declare war; I may make war. If I were to ask Congress to declare war they might argue about it for three months." This was an impeachable offense. He allowed undercover British agents to operate freely and illegally within the United States. His unprovoked belligerency toward the Japanese as well as the Germans helped cause the attack on Pearl Harbor—which he may well have been fully aware of in advance—even as he vilified and persecuted the critics of his policies as "Nazis" and "traitors."

World War II nevertheless remains "the holy war of the American establishment," as Joe Sobran has called it. It legitimized the emergence of the United States as a global superpower, contrary to the Constitution and to the American tradition. Between 1941 and 1945, Washington became the command-and-control center of the ultra-centralized, unitary state that today seeks "benevolent global hegemony." Just as the New Deal created the bureaucratic Leviathan and destroyed those vestiges of the Old Republic that had survived Lincoln, FDR's war turned America into a "superpower" obliged to carry the burdens of democracy and human rights forever—first to Seoul and Saigon, then to Bosnia and Kosovo, and on to missions yet unimagined, to new Hitlers and "victims of genocide" still unknown, until it destroys itself.

"It seems to me," wrote H.L. Mencken in his private diary on April 13, 1945, the day after FDR's death, "to be very likely that Roosevelt will take a high place in American popular history—maybe even alongside Washington and Lincoln . . . He had every quality that morons esteem in their heroes." FDR built a cult of personality just as Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin did. Power depends on such a cult. His current sainthood would have appalled many of his contemporaries, even if it would not have surprised them. "He was the first American," wrote Mencken, "to penetrate to the real depths of vulgar stupidity. He never made the mistake of overestimating the intelligence of the American mob." For those Americans who love the Old Republic, Franklin Roosevelt—not an irrelevant Mussolini—was and remains the enemy.

When Mussolini left the stage 55 years ago, the Italian nation was still its old self. Over two decades of fascism had left Italian society and its key institutions—family, Church, education, arts, culture, local communities—largely intact, or even strengthened. Il Duce was, in the end, all smoke and little fire, too humane to murder people on any large scale or to re-engineer seriously the country which he did love, albeit in a flawed way.

FDR left the stage only weeks earlier, but his legacy is alive and well in the destruction of America's families, faith, tradition, education, arts, culture, and local communities, and in the burgeoning globalist empire embodied in Dr. Albright.

FDR's "vision thing" has become a global bane. It leaves no country unscathed, Italy included, as the rubbish on Italian TV and radio, the newly arrived alien multitudes in bad and even not-so-bad parts of Milan, and the dismally few *bambini* in its maternity wards attest. This bane will just as surely destroy Italy as it will destroy America unless the supporters of truth, faith, and tradition on both sides of the Atlantic organize and fight to recover their neighborhoods, their schools, and their families for the sake of themselves, their nations, and our common civilization.

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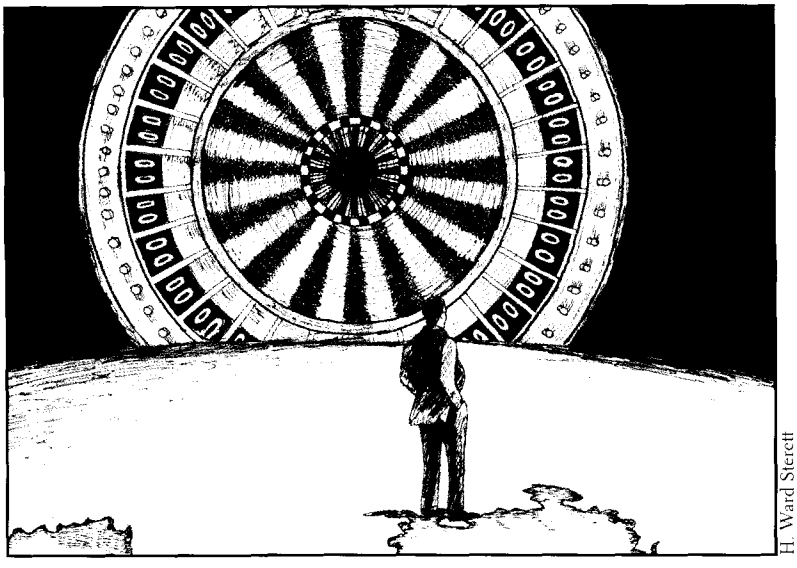
# Why I Live in Italy

by Andrei Navrozov



H. Ward Sterett

I live in Italy—in Venice, which I have on occasion described as Italy's Italy—for the deceptively simple reason that it is the only place in the world where I do not feel the urge to play roulette after dinner. I have actually thought long and hard about this opening sentence of mine, trying to decide whether a gambler's confession would make for a suitable literary gambit when addressing *Chronicles*' readers. And I have come to the conclusion that yes, actually, this is a perfectly reasonable way of getting at whatever it is I want to say about Italy, and about my reasons for settling here.

In the totalitarian Russia where I spent my childhood, it seemed that chance had been abolished by decree, or, as the famous phrase went, "liquidated as a class." If you did not pass the university entrance examinations, you were drafted into the army for three years, with consequences for the remainder of your adult life that were as brutal as they were predictable. If you circulated a typewritten letter among your friends, lamenting a social reality or sharing a political dream, you were hauled off to jail. Again, there was no chance about it; it was going to happen as inevitably as one day follows another in the life of Solomon Grundy. Everybody knew the minutiae of chancelessness that attached to university placement, to army conscription, to unemployment, to dissidence, to crime. Everybody knew exactly what was going to happen next at every conceivable juncture.

*Andrei Navrozov is* Chronicles' *European correspondent. This article is adapted from his speech at The Rockford Institute's conference on the rise (and fall) of Italy and the United States.*

Hence, at some later point in life, I was doomed to discover within myself the demonic attractions of roulette, that chanciest of all the games of hazard. It is as though the oxygen of the unpredictable that I had been denied throughout my youth became a kind of drug, a kind of over-priced placebo, a kind of hope that there, on the table covered in green baize, some meaningful revenge could be had on a mechanistic, godless universe where obedience and cowardice were automatically rewarded, even as thought and risk were the known and certain losers—revenge on a world that worked like a clock, with Swiss precision.

Switzerland has not produced much literature, and this is hardly a coincidence. If we think back on the famous novels we found so exciting when we first read them in adolescence—Scott, Dickens, Balzac, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Manzoni—we may notice that chance, coincidence, confluence of circumstances, and accident are their lifeblood. But if we look deeper, beneath the skin of the genre, we see that another and better name for what makes these novels come to life is relationships—between men, between men and women, men and places, men and God—relationships that, in the real world reflecting itself in the minds of their authors, seem to have a great and natural sweep.

Returning to my childhood in Russia, I now see that this litmus test, too, is working. Because under totalitarianism all relationships, like all chance, are at an end. What sort of intimacy can there be between a man and a woman in Orwell's world? What kind of loving son is born to them in Kafka's? What sort of loyal friend do they have in Zamyatin's? What city can they



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love and call their own in Huxley's? Oh, certainly, as a matter of practical convenience there were, in the world of my youth, those called husbands and wives, there were children and family friends, there were even some conurbations called cities, and one or two genuine dreamers in them. But there was no waiter in the café whom you saw every morning, there was no cabdriver with whom you exchanged momentary confidences, there was no little seamstress girl to whom you could take your trousers to be hemmed, and then fall in love with and run away to Rio. Challenging as it is for a writer, I do not want to dilate unnecessarily on these random situations, each of them merely one of the countless cells that make up the whole miraculous organism we know as freedom. It ought to be clear by now that life in freedom, as well as the literature that reflects it, is made up of billions upon billions of such trifles, which are actually relationships.

My nearly 30 years of expatriate existence, first in America, then in England, and finally in Italy, have shown me that the world we think of as free—or at least non-totalitarian—is totalitarianizing itself at an ever-increasing pace. The oasis is being blown over by sandstorms, and one feels the harshness of the sirocco even in Venice. The other day, the waiters at the bar I go to every morning had to put on identical hair-covering caps as a matter of European Community law. A week before, the gondoliers got into a nasty fistfight with some Malays selling electric toys outside a *traghetto* station by the Rialto. And the little seamstress girl from Burano now wants to go and study computer programming, as though the combined populations of Melbourne, Liverpool, and Delhi could not be trusted to provide the major airlines with an adequate number of clerks.

Our world is not standing still; it is moving in the direction of totalitarian sameness. The old political institutions, such as the House of Lords, are falling, while the political institutions that are now emerging, such as the European Commission, are designed both to catalyze the trend and to consolidate it.

For the last thousand years, Europe has lived between two political tendencies, one centrifugal, with fragmentation as a possible result, and the other centripetal, toward likely consolidation. The first was known historically as feudalism; the second, as absolutism. But in our own lifetime, and that of our fathers and grandfathers, the stakes, as a gambler would say, have been upped. Absolutism now means something more radical than it did to the authors of the Magna Charta—it means totalitarianism. Feudalism now means something less drastic than it did to William Morris. It means the life I still find in Italy, although it is vanishing here, too, even in Venice. Whatever in life is worth living for—that is to say, whatever there is in life that bears any relation to the genitive forces that produced European civilization, and our literature in particular—can be described as vestigial feudalism.

Connected to its last vestiges by potential relationships, by actual places and place names, by natural beauty, and by the still-living history of every stone, I am cured of the gambling impulse. I can live my life in a city square, and feel the adrenaline of the unknown and the unexpected coursing through my veins as if I were part of a game for the highest stakes imaginable. But a short airplane flight and I'm in London, sitting with friends in a fashionable Japanese restaurant in an equally pricey American hotel, and the evening stretching before me is like one of those dead certainties of my youth, and I can tell in advance whether the blonde in Voyage is, or is not, going to sleep with my Lebanese friend that night, and whether the brunette in Prada is going to get her cocaine in the end.

You may say: Andrei, you mix with the wrong people. Not so, because the whole ethos of a totalitarian—or, in this case, totalitarianizing—society is that everybody is more or less after the same thing. The thing may shroud itself in proclamations of liberty; espouse equal rights, sexual freedom, and Japanese food; redefine itself first as McDonald's hamburgers, then as ten ounces of bread, and finally as nine grams of lead. What is important here is that its very sameness be, as it were, always the same. Thus, everybody in New York would like to live on Fifth Avenue, and those who don't are those who can't afford to. Full stop. Can you imagine how eccentric, how criminally eccentric, a very rich New Yorker would have to be to decide to move to Queens?

Yet, when I first came to London 15 years ago, there was not one single book everybody felt obliged to buy, not one restaurant where everybody wanted to go, not one place everybody wished to have as the return address on their letters in the way Kensington and Chelsea are now. People lived everywhere, rich and poor, fashionable or not. The drunk whom I used to ask to wash the windows of my first house in London had been born in Mayfair, next door to Winston Churchill. And this is, of course, exactly what you still find in Italy, that social and physical jumble of 1630's Milan as described by Manzoni, that whole carousel of life all of a sudden knocked down by the plague. The grocer is next to the great *palazzo*, the gondola repair shop is next to the great church, the poor carpenter is next to Gucci, and the consequence is that relationships flourish still.

I have no space to talk politics here, to persuade my readers that my conviction that totalitarianism is the destiny of Europe and of all mankind is not based merely on my observation of casinos and cafés, but rather on my analysis of the future of Russia and China on the one hand, and on the West's almost total blindness to that future on the other. The creeping advance of global totalitarianism is the modern equivalent of the great plague described in *I Promessi Sposi*. What it promises is, above all, the total unraveling of the absurdly rich and indescribably beautiful texture of life created by Christian Europe during the last millennium. It promises the disappearance of the human relationship—as well as of the relationship between people and things, and eventually of the people and of the things themselves—as the blood of life, the substance without which neither thought, nor conscience, nor literature are possible in any meaningful sense. It promises a world populated at best by automatons and at worst by scavengers, by the corpse-removing *monatti* described by Manzoni, minus, perhaps, the distinctive bells they wore on their feet.

If the hero of *I Promessi Sposi* had not come across one of those bells in the road by accident, the novel's *denouement* might have been very different: Renzo might not have found his beloved Lucia. In 1630, in a world scourged by an old-fashioned plague, there was still room for chance. I fear that 30 years hence, in the year 2030, there may be no room for that at all, not even in the unpredictably crooked streets of my beloved Venice.

I do not want to live in that world. Until the plague turns pandemic, I am determined to seek out the places least affected by the contagion of totalitarianism, which many in the West mistakenly think of as progress. I can afford to do this, with the money I save by not gambling. c



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# CHRONICLES INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

## Immigration Misinformation

### Teeming Masses and Funny Numbers

by Virginia Deane Abernethy

The debate over immigration policy has been marked by inaccurate reporting in an astonishing number of instances. Errors and material omissions by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the Census Bureau, and the Department of Education are only the beginning of misinformation about immigration. News releases and publications by experts, including some associated with the federal government, add to the confusion about the population explosion most Americans observe in their communities.

The mistakes are systematic. All direct the reader (listener, viewer) to believe that the U.S. population is not growing unusually fast compared to that of other industrialized countries, that immigration is a negligible source of this growth, and that immigration is not contributing to many of the nation's social problems.

For example, the H1-B and refugee debates are being revisited. As of March 2000, congressional subcommittees on immigration had voted out proposals ranging from an additional 45,000 H1-B visas this year to as many as 195,000 additional visas over the next three years.

In 1998, months of congressional debate over increasing the number of H1-B visas to allow additional skilled immigrants to enter the United States culminated in raising the number of visas from 65,000 to 115,000 for two years and then 107,500 in the third year. Additional provisions of the so-called American Competitiveness Act of 1998 gave amnesty to 50,000 Haitians who were illegally in the United States and delayed for 30 months the implementation of provisions of a 1996 law to expedite deportation of illegal aliens.

The debate was marked by acrimony and conflicting statistics. Invited to testify before Congress, the presidents and chief executive officers of numerous information technology (IT) companies explained that they needed to import computer software specialists in order to remain competitive. American universities, they claimed, were graduating insufficient numbers of IT specialists. T.J. Rodgers, president and CEO of Cypress Semiconductor Corporation, struck the prevalent note: "[W]e have strong feelings about the value provided by immigrant engineers—and also about the factually hollow, emotion-driven claims of those who insist the U.S. semiconductor industry could retain its current global leadership without an adequate supply of high-quality engineers, including immigrants." Rodgers added that "The need for skilled workers in the high-tech sector is growing exponentially. . . . Foreign skilled workers do not take jobs from Americans . . . but, in fact, create additional jobs."

Industry representatives and congressional allies, Sen. Spencer Abraham (R-MI) foremost among them, relied on several sets of data to bolster personal testimony. For example, they argued that, between 1994 and 1997, the Labor Department and the Commerce Department nearly tripled the number of job openings it "certified," a declaration that no American was trained and available to do these jobs. A survey by the Information Technology Association of America found that "Half of all respondents cited [a lack of high-skilled workers] as the biggest barrier" to growth. Finally, the Hudson Institute concluded in *Workforce 2020* that the skilled-labor shortage could "shave 5% off the growth rate of GDP."

Others argued that the labor shortage is a mirage. Edwin Rubenstein suggests, "The alleged shortage of highly educated workers in the U.S. is a myth. In fact, we're suffering from a chronic surplus of Ph.D.'s." In June 1998, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), chairman of the House of Representatives Immigration Subcommittee of the Judiciary, released a survey showing that 21 American high-tech companies had dismissed 121,800 workers since December 1997. As Norman Matloff, a professor of computer science, said in an interview with *Investors' Business Daily*: "The problem is that most employers prefer less-expensive talent. Most software firms surveyed hire less than 5% of the software professionals that apply for jobs. Microsoft Corporation hires 2%. Brodebur Software Inc. hires just 1%."

The General Accounting Office (GAO) is likewise skeptical of the purported labor shortage. Its assessment of the U.S. Department of Commerce study is that it "has serious analytical and methodological weaknesses that undermine the credibility of its conclusion that a shortage of IT workers exists." The GAO further criticizes the Information Technology Association of America findings, saying that the association had relied "on two employer surveys with 'unacceptably low' response rates of 14 percent and 36 percent."

Hardly mentioned in this debate is the *long-term* effect of responding to labor-market shortages by importing immigrant labor: namely, to dampen wage increases that would otherwise occur, which is, of course, the subtext in industry's lobbying for additional immigrant workers. However, higher wages for skilled labor are not necessarily bad for the economy.

Demand-induced market adjustments in the price of labor are the traditional capitalist mechanism for overcoming labor shortages. Higher wages signal those seeking employment, or considering an area of specialization, to select the sector where wages are rising. This raises the quality of American jobs while ensuring that the shortage will be temporary. In addition, higher-cost labor is an inducement for industry to invest in capital

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projects or training that increase productivity. These arguments have lately been submerged by the concerted lobbying of groups that have an interest in high levels of immigration.

In tandem with the Competitiveness Act, Congress passed a weak version of the Religious Persecution Act sponsored by Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) and Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA). In its original form, this bill would have authorized a new State Department office to certify religions whose adherents are persecuted, granting automatic refugee or asylum status to any practitioner of a certified religion in the specified countries. This bill would have put the burden of proof that an individual was not a *bona fide* adherent of the certified religion on *U.S. agencies*, essentially opening America's borders to unlimited immigration at the discretion of the State Department. Its enactment in a weaker version raises the possibility that its provisions will be strengthened over time until its sponsors' original goals are achieved.

In March 1996, Rep. Lamar Smith and Sen. Alan Simpson (R-WY) sponsored legislation to reduce immigration. The bill had substantial bipartisan support despite being opposed by the leadership of both parties, notably President Clinton, Senators Edward Kennedy and Spencer Abraham, and Representatives Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey.

Doris Meissner, commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, testified that immigration had declined ten percent in 1994 and again in 1995. One month later, when the bill's momentum had dissipated, it was leaked that legal immigration in 1996 was expected to increase by 41 percent over 1995 and that a similar increase was expected in 1997. The INS had apparently been in possession of these facts at the time of Meissner's testimony.

"If the INS had projections about the dramatic hike in legal immigration and did not release it to Congress before debate on the effort to lower immigration numbers, its actions were unconscionable," charged Senator Simpson.

The effort to reduce legal immigration ended with the 1996 bill. Provisions to control illegal immigration—many of which have subsequently been gutted by the INS—were substituted for the original bill. It is likely that no immigration-restriction legislation will be enacted unless the United States enters a recession.

Robert Warren, director of the statistics division of the INS, has also found occasion to use immigration data creatively. In *Population Today*, the house organ of the Population Reference Bureau, Warren concludes that "immigrants currently account for 20 percent of the gross annual additions to the population." The statement is technically correct as the answer to the question, "What fraction is immigration of the sum of births plus immigration?"

The catches, however, are the word "gross" and the misleading title of Warren's piece, "Immigration's Share of U.S. Population Growth," which suggests a calculation of the *net* demographic impact of immigration. Using Warren's own figures, the correct answer to the query posed in the title of his paper is 39 percent, not 20 percent.

Physicist Albert A. Bartlett's comment on Warren's procedure is trenchant:

> The substitution of the answer to one problem as the answer to another superficially similar problem is an old and honorable art that shows no sign of decline. But it is surprising nevertheless to see this strategy used in an article by an author who is identified as "Director of the Statistical Division of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service."

Bartlett continues: "A separate but related issue is the significant difference between the data used by Warren and those from another source that uses INS data to record and report the number of immigrants entering the United States." Warren's percentage figure is applied to a population increase of just 2.8 million. But the Center for Immigration Studies tabulated immigrant categories for the same year, 1993-94, and concluded that the annual immigrant flow accounted for 43 percent of a 3.1 million increase in the population. Asks Bartlett, "Is it Warren's [desire], or the desire of the INS, to make immigration figures look as small as possible?"

The sleight of hand continues. As demographers Dennis Ahlburg and James Vaupel observe, "Population projection is not a bloodless technical task, but a politically charged craft of great interest to policymakers and the public." Not surprisingly, scenarios for future population size and composition vary enormously.

For example, the National Research Council (NRC) takes 1995 as the baseline year in its projections. With "zero" immigration hypothetically beginning in 1995, the population would grow to 310 million and begin to decline before 2050. Under the "medium" immigration scenario, the population grows without stopping, reaching 387 million by mid-century. By making this the *middle* projection, the NRC appears to imply that this is the most likely scenario.

It is not. At present, the U.S. population is growing by about one percent annually. A growth rate of one percent causes the quantity to double in 70 years. Given the conservative population estimate of approximately 274 million in late 1999, the United States will have a population of 546 million by 2069. Indeed, one of the more recent Census Bureau estimates puts the U.S. population at almost 500 million by 2050.

The pattern of Census Bureau projections, however, does not inspire confidence. Past assumptions about immigration, fertility, and mortality rates resulted in several years of unrealistically low projections of future population size. In 1989, the Census Bureau's middle projection was just 300 million by 2050. Its high projection, 414 million, received little media attention. Within the year, however, demographers Ahlburg and Vaupel wrote that, under assumptions which seemed plausible, the U.S. population in 2050 would likely be at least 400 million and possibly as high as 553 million.

The composition of the population is another important consideration. Polls suggest that most Americans, especially blacks, want large reductions in immigration and would prefer that the future population of the United States be composed of their own descendants, rather than immigrants. The keys to evaluating the makeup of the future population are immigrant flows, ethnic-group fertility rates, and the year used for the baseline population.

If one projects to the year 2050 from 2040, immigration accounts for relatively little population increase. In 1996, the U.S. Census Bureau released a report stating that, by the middle of the 21st century, immigrants and their descendants will account for 60 percent of all population growth since 1994 if current trends persist. If the baseline year is 1970, however, when the impact of the 1965 immigration law that elevated the



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criteria of diversity and "family reunification" first became manifest, the scenario is far different. According to demographer Meredith Burke, "immigrants after 1970 and their descendants account for three quarters of current American population growth" and will account for "90 percent of the growth between 2000 and 2030—and all of the growth after 2030." Move the starting line, and the numbers change.

The same thing occurs when the impact of immigration on education is examined. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley announced an enrollment crisis in American education in a special report entitled *The Baby Boom Echo*, released on August 21, 1996: "Twenty-five years after the baby boom generation set a national record for school enrollment . . . it is fitting that the children of the baby boomers are doing the record breaking."

The problem with the report's title and conclusion is that the recent large and rapid increases in the school population are *not* primarily the result of children born to baby boomers; Riley's attribution is disingenuous. The baby boomers have below-replacement level fertility; they are not reproducing themselves.

Linda H. Thom, a retired statistician from the Santa Barbara (CA) County Administrator's office, attacks the Education Department's report with the department's own data—which can be found in the report itself or in the *Digest of Educational Statistics*. Analyzing enrollment trends between 1975 and 1990, Thom finds that "nationally, average daily attendance (ADA), excluding California, declined by 3,542,207 students. In California, however, ADA increased by 699,030. Large enrollment gains were also experienced in Florida and Texas."

These three border states lead the list of immigrant destinations in the United States. In California, the major immigrant destination, county-by-county comparisons of the school-age population show that the children of immigrants and children who have themselves immigrated account for the higher enrollment numbers.

The increase in child poverty is a related issue. Secretary Riley states that many more of America's young people live in poverty now than three decades ago: "In 1970, near the peak of the last [school] enrollment high, the number of young people living in poverty barely exceeded 10 million. In 1995, the number of young people who were struggling reached 15.7 million." Riley offers no useful explanation of what caused this increase.

However, Thom suggests, "If immigration caused the enrollment increase, then immigration caused the poverty increase." During the 1980's, California, Texas, and Florida accounted for 98 percent of the increased caseload in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. The U.S. General Accounting Office reports that, for that same decade, "the total number of school children declined by 2.3 million," and the number of white and black school-age children also declined. But the number of poor students increased. Thom concludes: "Hispanic and Asian/Pacific children accounted for all of the added poor, school-age children."

Educational achievement often reflects parental education and values. Unfortunately, Mexican and Central American immigrants average less than an eighth-grade education. Mexico and Central America are not only the source of the largest annual immigrant flows into California and the United States in general; Hispanic women now account for approximately 18 percent of all births, up from 14 percent in 1989. Mexican, Central, and South American women (not Cuban) account for most of this increase.

These facts are never mentioned in connection with the problems of population growth—overcrowding, budget deficits in local governments, environmental stress—that trouble Americans. Child poverty, bloated school budgets, and a poorly educated, unskilled labor force have multiple components, but a common denominator appears to be the very high level of immigration into the United States.

Many statistical reports require a second look. The National Center for Health Statistics, in reporting on illegitimacy rates, plays with the categories "white, black, and Hispanic" in a way that seems to inflate the rates for whites and blacks in comparison with Hispanics.

The illegitimacy statistics are not an isolated instance of creative reporting. FBI crime statistics report the ethnic group of *victims* and *perpetrators*, but they do so differently. Victims are classified "black, white, Hispanic or other"; but the perpetrator classification drops "Hispanic." Under the system in place at least as late as 1999, an assault on an Hispanic *by* an Hispanic is reported as either black-on-Hispanic or white-on-Hispanic crime. Most Hispanics are classified as "white." Clearly, this is an irresponsible irritant to race relations.

Similar errors are found in a range of publications. *Workforce 2000*, released in 1987 by the Hudson Institute, includes a particularly grievous error. The report's executive summary announced that only 15 percent of the entrants into the workforce during the 13 years leading up to the year 2000 would be white males. The alarm was raised in every newsroom and every Fortune 500 boardroom in the United States.

The correct datum, however, is that white males were expected to be *31 percent* of all entrants into the labor force, with 15 percent more entering than retiring by the year 2000. The error crept in through omission of the word "net" from the executive summary. In effect, net new skilled jobs had to grow by 15 percent just to keep pace with the job needs of young white American men, to say nothing of minorities and women.

Richard C. Atkinson, chancellor of the University of California-San Diego, exposed the error in a letter to the editor that appeared in *Science* shortly after the publication of *Workforce 2000*. But for approximately one year, no mass news media broke—or perhaps even knew—the complete story.

The erroneous report and the near-panic reaction in some quarters helped create momentum for the 1990 legislation that raised legal immigrant (green card) visas by 40 percent. H1-B visas for skilled workers were added without an offsetting reduction in other visa categories. Indeed, almost every visa category was enlarged.

Three weeks after Congress increased legal immigration visas, a sidebar in the November 19, 1990, issue of *U.S. News and World Report* exposed *Workforce 2000*'s mistake. Were the error and the lack of timely corrections the work of gremlins?

Distortions also characterized the initial press release and certain editorial comments regarding the National Research Council study of immigration, *The New Americans* (1997). Sen. Spencer Abraham and the chair of the NRC study panel co-authored a piece for the *New York Times* that provoked NRC panelists George J. Borjas and Richard B. Freeman to respond with an article titled "Findings We Never Found." Outraged at various misrepresentations, Harvard economists Borjas and Freeman objected that certain public figures, specifically Senator Abraham and Rand Corporation economist James P. Smith,



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"make it seem as if immigration is a free lunch for Americans. . . . [They] simply failed to mention that the bulk of the increase in the GNP [due to immigration] goes to the immigrants themselves as wages and salaries, not to the native born." The economic benefit to natives is on the order of one to ten billion dollars annually—trivial in an eight-trillion-dollar economy.

Moreover, the economic benefit of immigration (growth in GNP) may be more than offset by public and social costs. Referring to the widening gap between rich and poor, Borjas and Freeman explain, "The Academy report also concluded that 44 percent of the decline in the real wages of high school dropouts from 1980 to 1995 resulted from immigration. . . . There are 13 million such workers." Immigration creates winners and losers: Employers who can substitute cheaper immigrant for native-born labor win, to the tune of approximately $140 billion annually. At the same time, workers whose wages are driven down by rapid growth in the size of the labor force lose by approximately $133 billion annually. Immigration has negated 40 years of U.S. social policy designed to end poverty.

Yet the beat goes on. The INS, between August 1995 and September 1996, gave citizenship to an estimated 39,000 ineligible aliens, including 11,500 criminals, according to independent auditing and consulting firm Peat Marwick. The Peat Marwick study found that over 90 percent of the INS naturalization and processing procedures that resulted in 1.05 million new U.S. citizens eligible to vote in the 1996 election were flawed.

On November 11-12, 1998, the annual conference of the State Department's Office of Refugee Resettlement attracted 1,200 participants to the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. Approximately half of those present were government officials, including Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala. Speakers and workshops addressed the means by which private and government organizations could secure public health-care and welfare programs for refugees (and asylum seekers), and how anti-discrimination legislation could be invoked to circumvent welfare limits and prevent the denial of benefits.

Secretary Shalala stated that over 39 percent of active tuberculosis cases and approximately 60 percent of hepatitis B cases in the United States are found in the immigrant population. She suggested that the prevalence of disease among immigrants could be used as a wedge to move the United States toward the national health-care model proposed by Hillary Clinton's health-care task force in 1993-94.

Of lesser policy importance, but indicative of the mood, the moment of silence at the conference in observance of Veterans Day was not for American vets, but rather for Red Army veterans (Russian refugees) who are drawing Supplemental Security Income benefits (SSI) in New York City. In fact, the increase in SSI benefits to immigrants, especially refugees, is several hundred percent greater than to the native-born population.

The refugee authorization for 1999 was 78,000 persons, not including about 20,000 Cubans who entered under a separate program. These refugees entered under the 1989 Lautenberg Amendment, which grants them immediate entitlement to any benefit available to citizens, including Social Security. Those who apply for asylum after entering the United States are not included in that 78,000; they numbered about 50,000 in 1999.

The category system for allocating immigrant and refugee visas—whether the criteria be country or continent of origin, religious affiliation, skills, or family reunification—leads to jockeying for position and logrolling among ethnic, business, and other interest groups, and results in larger numbers of newcomers and unstoppable population growth. The only strategy that will stabilize U.S. population size is to enact an all-inclusive immigration cap or moratorium. The number need not be zero, because some people emigrate each year; and the number probably ought not be zero because American citizens who marry foreigners should expect to be able to bring in their spouse after some reasonable period of time. However, the expectation that all "family reunification" should occur in the United States rather than in some other country is unreasonable. Immigration of 100,000 to 200,000 persons annually is compatible with a stable U.S. population.

By large majorities, white, black, and Hispanic voters have endorsed immigration reduction. Nevertheless, the issue has not become politically salient, unlike, for example, improving education, saving Social Security, and reducing taxes. Each of these goals, however, becomes more difficult to achieve as the immigrant population grows.

A vocal minority of wealthy contributors to both major political parties, representing left and right, have forged an alliance in support of high levels of immigration. Pro-immigration activists including the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Trial Lawyers Association, and "many Jewish groups," according to *Washington Jewish Week* (March 28, 1996), engaged in "a concerted lobbying campaign" to preserve the current refugee and other immigrant flows. Barring a recession, the latent disgruntlement with high levels of immigration is unlikely to coalesce into a strong grassroots movement except in the border states. The mis- and disinformation campaigns have been a resounding success. ◦c


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"All the News Unfit to Print"

# Signs of the Times

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Most American conservatives are aware of the close connection between Al Gore's family and the late, unlamented Armand Hammer, one of the most appalling figures in the 20th-century American rogues' gallery. But in order to read about that connection in a major daily newspaper, they have to look abroad—to England, where the *Independent* has published a major exposé of the Gore-Hammer connection (May 21). The article first recounted how Al Gore's claim to be an expert on Russia:

> blew up in his face last year when critics asked why, if he knew so much about Russia, he only learnt from the newspapers about the scandal over the laundering of $10 [billion] in Russian money through the Bank of New York.

But this criticism missed the real target; there is a Russian connection that may prove Gore's undoing. According to the *Independent*, it concerns:

> the extraordinary relationship between his father, Senator Al Gore Sr, and Armand Hammer, the American multi-millionaire, who, after meeting Lenin, became the Soviet Union's first foreign investor in 1921. Hammer also served, according to secret Soviet documents since released, as the conduit for laundering money to Soviet intelligence operations and Communist parties abroad.

According to the *Independent*, Gore had access to the Soviet, and then the Russian, leadership long before he became Vice President, thanks to his father's links to Hammer and his high-level Soviet contacts. For his part, Hammer was quoted as saying that he had Gore Senior in his "back pocket." As early as 1950, Hammer had made Congressman Gore his business partner. He needed political protection because J. Edgar Hoover suspected him of being a Soviet agent. Hoover was right, although that only became clear in 1996 when the Russians opened several secret archives. While in Congress, Al Gore, Sr., helped to keep the FBI off Hammer's back. After his retirement, the baton was passed to the freshman senator for Tennessee, Al Gore, Jr. As the *Independent* points out, however, the Russian connection remained concealed throughout:

> Not surprisingly Soviet and later Russian leaders—often the same people—favour Mr Gore for the presidency as an associate of their favourite capitalist. Andrei Kortunov, president of the Moscow Science Foundation, . . . says: "The traditional establishment likes the Gore family." On meeting Al Gore Jr in Washington in 1985, he recalls being struck by the senator's knowledge of the Soviet Union. Mr Gore was right in saying he knows a lot about Russia, but he is hardly likely to publicise the reason why.

Unaware of the rattling of these old skeletons, or unperturbed knowing that they won't reach our own courtier press, in the first week of June Vice President Gore announced the "second American revolution." "The next Thomas Edison or Marie Curie may be a child waiting in a ghetto or a rural hollow for the tools to learn and experiment," Gore rhapsodized. "Let's get him—or her—wired and online." But according to the *Washington Times* (June 5):

> Tenants of Mr. Gore, who rent a house from Gore Realty within eyesight of the vice president's Carthage, Tenn., farm, live in squalid conditions that his property managers have allowed to fester for more than a year. Their toilets routinely overflow, raw sewage leaks from the base of a commode and foul-smelling mud comes up through their sink.

The *Washington Times* concludes that "there seems to be no limit to Al Gore's compassion when it comes to spending taxpayers' money on the theoretical high-tech needs of poor children in general":

> But when it comes to real children he is actually obliged to serve—by a rental agreement if not by his high-minded principles—suddenly he becomes much more stingy.

Let's take leave of Mr. Gore with an item from Associated Press (June 6) that, at the time of this writing, was not picked up by the Big Media:

> In a memo kept secret for 2 1/2 years, FBI Director Louis Freeh warned that the Justice Department was ignoring "reliable evidence" that conflicted with Al Gore's accounts of his fund-raising activities. . . . "In the face of compelling evidence that the vice president was a very active, sophisticated fund-raiser who knew exactly what he was doing, his own exculpatory statements must not be given undue weight," the Freeh memo said.

While Janet Reno's Justice Department decides how to shield Mr. Gore from any possible unpleasantness, law enforcement agencies may soon be directed to focus their efforts on foreign students in the United States. According to the London *Times* (June 5):

> To tackle the threat of international terrorism, the US should monitor every foreign student within its borders, encourage CIA agents to recruit more "unsavoury" informants and impose sanctions on friendly states who fail to act against terrorists . . . The



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> National Commission on Terrorism gave warning that US anti-terrorism policies were "seriously deficient" and recommended a series of drastic measures that have angered its allies accused of tolerating terrorism. The most radical element in the report is a proposal to begin surveillance of every foreign student on US soil, since "a small minority may exploit their student status to support terrorist activity."

While it makes sense to monitor those foreign nationals—including students—who fall into some higher-risk category, the dictum of political correctness which demands that "racial" (or religious, or ethnic) profiling of students must not be applied means that *all* foreign students must be monitored, Dutch and Swiss no less than Muslim. A threat from foreign student radicals may exist, but to understand the real nature of the threat we must return to Britain. The *Guardian* reported on May 16 that "a growing number of students are being recruited on British campuses by Islamic extremists," and many end up on the world's front lines. The extremist party Al-Muhajiroun, which is engaged in campus recruitment, is active in the United States as well:

> Sheikh Bakri-Muhammad, who founded the party in Saudi Arabia in 1983, says it is the duty of all Muslims to engage in jihad. He said: "I believe in the divine cause for Muslims to struggle." [He] admitted that there is a global network of agents with connections to the military camps, some of whom work from Britain . . . They know that the military warfare they are engaged in may be called terrorism by the British government. But they are convinced that they are obeying a higher authority. "The law could go to hell," says Abdullah. "On the one hand I have Tony Blair to follow, and on the other my creator" . . . To Sheikh Bakri-Muhammad, Islamising Britain is a "divine duty." He regularly preaches Islamic globalisation in his lectures and in party literature.

The consequences of Washington's determination to put on political blinders in its attempts to combat terrorism are becoming painfully obvious at the trial in the Netherlands of two Libyans accused of blowing up Pan Am flight 103 over Scotland in 1989. According to the Glasgow *Sunday Herald* (May 28), Libya had nothing to do with Lockerbie. It was Syria, but this was inconvenient for the Clinton administration to admit because of its attempts to broker a peace agreement between Syria and Israel:

> A former CIA agent who claims Libya is not responsible for the Lockerbie bombing . . . faces 10 years in prison if he reveals any information about the terrorist attack . . . Dr Richard Fuisz, a multi-millionaire businessman and pharmaceutical researcher, was, according to US intelligence sources, the CIA's key operative in the Syrian capital Damascus during the 1980s . . . One month before a court order was served on him by the US government gagging him from speaking on the grounds of national security, he spoke to US congressional aide Susan Lindauer, telling her he knew the identities of the Lockerbie bombers and claiming they were not Libyan. Lindauer, shocked by Fuisz's claims, immediately compiled notes on the meeting which formed the basis of a later sworn affidavit detailing Fuisz's claims. One month after their conversation, in October 1994, a court in Washington DC issued an order barring him from revealing any information on the grounds of "military and state secrets privilege".

Lindauer claims that Fuisz made "unequivocal statements to me that he has first-hand knowledge about the Lockerbie case" and that he can identify who orchestrated and executed the bombing. In her suppressed affidavit, she states that Fuisz "has said that he can confirm absolutely that no Libyan national was involved in planning or executing the bombing of PanAm 103, either in any technical or advisory capacity whatsoever." This is in line with the claims of an Iranian defector currently being debriefed by the CIA in Turkey, who claims that the bombing was the work of Syria and Iran.

We end with an update on a group that is increasingly replacing terrorism with old-fashioned gangsterism. "KLA-linked Gangs Commit 2000 Robberies in Spain" ran the self-explanatory headline in the leading Madrid daily *El Pais* (May 7):

> "They act with the effectiveness of commandos," acknowledges a spokesman for a private security company. They assault business establishments across the countryside. They carefully plan the strike; they act at night; they take the money from the safe; they depart without leaving tracks and with virtually no witnesses.

*El Pais* reports that they move all over the country to carry out their attacks. One crew rents a nearby site, another gathers information about the target, and a third carries out the strike. They prefer to use Italian identity cards, easily obtained through a support network in Italy:

> One estimate of the Civil Guard sets the amount of money obtained by these bands at almost 4,000 million pesetas, acquired primarily during the last two years. This money allows them to finance their high life style and the means of executing their robberies. Nevertheless, this is not the only use for the money. A good portion of it is sent outside the country . . . There is some conjecture about the destination of the illegal funds. One hears much about the financing of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), but, as with other details, the information is still inadequate.

Spain, one of the last civilized nations in Europe, is about to join the international community. After the Kosovar gangs, Gypsy pickpockets and Andean street musicians can't be far behind. But when the first Gay Pride march hits Madrid, we'll know that the Castilian goose has finally been cooked.



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# M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E

by J.O. Tate

*"First grubs obscene, then wriggling worms,*
*Then painted butterflies."*

—Alexander Pope, *Phryne*

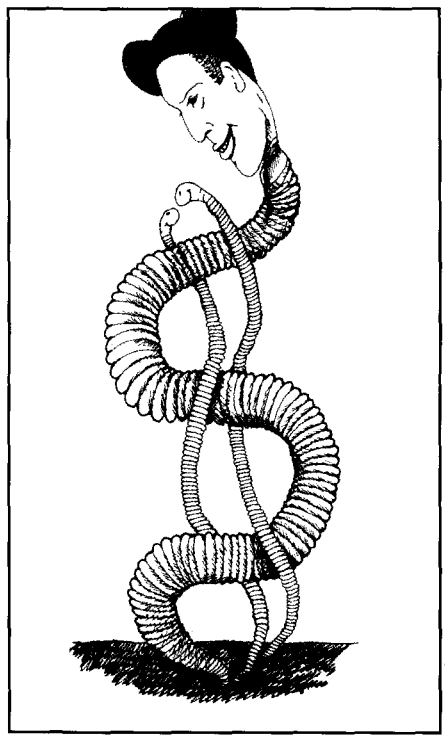
**Tinker Belles and Evil Queens: The Walt Disney Company from the Inside Out**
*by Sean Griffin*
*New York: New York University Press; 292 pp., $55.00*

◆

Maybe I'm bewitched, but I'm not bothered and certainly I'm not bewildered by Sean Griffin's *too* divinely unbelievable disquisition on one of everybody's favorite topics, and I'm not going to waste space by saying what *that* is, because you just read the title and subtitle and you'll know what I mean. So don't be a lazy little troll; just do your homework and I'll do mine, and we're going to get along just fine, you and me. I mean, you and I.

Now I *am* utterly—and I mean entirely, totally, and completely—convinced that *Tinker Belles and Evil Queens* is a vital work of our time, for so many reasons that I simply *can't* enumerate all of them in the stringent space limitation imposed on my freewheeling discourse by the rather bitchy editor of this section of this rather retrograde journal (and believe me, my little chickadees, they could all use some consciousness-raising around here). But clutch my pearls, my extempore effusions are just exhausting my precious space—I'm caught in the glow of my own brilliance, just trapped by the sound of my own dulcet tones! What's a girl to do?

*J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.*



H. Ward Sterett

I simply *must* pull myself together. But where to start? Begin at the beginning, you silly thing! So, in the first place then, this tome says a lot about the state of the academy *de nos jours*, being obviously a doctoral dissertation in critical studies at the University of Southern California and afterward—*cela va sans dire!*—published by N.Y.U., making Griffin bicoastal if not bi-anything else. Of course, as is only too well known, he's teaching now at Florida Atlantic University. His significant other, Harry Benshoff, is the author of *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film* (1997), and although Benshoff was cited in the index only twice, I found him in the notes and bibliography more often than that: I just thought that it was so nice 'n' cozy that they could be together in print that way. Of course, Benshoff's article, "Heigh-Ho, Height-Ho, Is Disney High or Low? From Silly Cartoons to Postmodern Politics" (*Animation Journal*, Fall 1992), may have just *possibly* suggested a teensy-weensy something to Griffin about his topic, if you know what I mean, and I just know you do. But this book is state-of-the-art, and to confirm that I looked for the *de rigueur* citations of Michel Foucault—and there they were. So much for any pesky old academic credibility concerns. You know, it takes me back, really. I used to hang out with Michel, but he had problems. (Did he ever have problems. *Quelle horreur!*)

But this book also has so much to teach us about style and nuance and theory—it's a veritable bonanza, a cornucopia, if you'll permit a frivolous flight of fancy, of instructive examples. *Figure-toi*: How on earth do we represent the dazzling inflections of our heightened, urgent speech in the boring conventions of ordinary discourse? Griffin has shown the way, and it just reminds me of Dr. Evil in those cute Austin Powers movies. You remember how, with finger gestures, he'd put "quotation marks" about the words he emphasized? Sean Griffin does the very "same" thing, only without the "mimetic" image, by using "quotation marks" around anything that has a "special" meaning. I just got carried away reading those "special" words and phrases: They're so exciting, and there are so many of them, and I sort of felt like I was actually hearing his very own oral emphases on examples like "queer appreciation," "opera queen," "something," "gay



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## Briefly Summer

*by Constance Rowell Mastores*

I like the wild formality,
the strict order that survives.
Dune grass, beach rose;
a spindly yarrow. In rivulets

by the roadside, watercress
and vines of morning glory.
Closer to the sea, a struggling
pine; or tea tree bent by winter,

its muted foliage rustling
as the wind passes to the east—
peacock feathers of palest
green. No ardent color

until you breach the dunes
and tumble into summer:
volleyball players in orange
and neon green. A Coney

Island of umbrellas. Yet soon
the season closes, its color
spent. The beach resumes
itself: bleached, shucked,

strewn with shell; in browns
and olive greens, kelp tautens
on the shore and turns to salt.
Forward into autumn the egret

stretches. Left to themselves
on sandy shoals, the harbor
seals growl and mumble, earth
tones blending and breathing

as they shift about. Pelicans,
in silent flight, cross over.
Steady as a line of patriarchs,
they move from sunset into dusk.

agenda," "special rights," "gay Mafia," "gay community," "drag queen," "non-straight," "homosexual culture," "heterosexual agenda," "capitalist agenda," "family," "gay market," "Disney discourse," "gay gene," "homosexuality," "masculine," "butch," "femme," "ideological state apparatuses," "other," "sexuality," "the homosexual consumer," "liberation," "lesbian," "gay," "queer," "smoking gun," "gay sensibility," and "out of the closet"—all these in the introduction alone! Imagine how I thrilled, realizing that such "expression" awaited me for another 290 pages of sheer bliss! This book is better than a Richard Simmons *Sweatin' to the Oldies* videotape or anything you care to mention, and in case you don't "get" the "picture," I spell this review *Fab-U-Lus*!!!

Only lack of space and a Glenn Close-type editor could force me to move on so brutally to "nuance." Griffin excels at "nuance." And what is a "nuance"? A "nuance" is a "distinction" about "queer theory." For example: "Gay culture" too often merely denotes "gay white male culture," and not "lesbian culture," or "black gay male culture," or "transgender" or "bisexual culture." The encompassing term is "queer culture," *not* "gay culture," and theories about that are subsumed under the term "queer theory."

That last sentence reminds me that my b----(rhymes with "witch") editor has left me only a few more words to cover "theory." As far as I've been able to understand, Sean Griffin has shown how capitalism has driven the Disney Company to be friendly to "the gay community." Along the way, he's told the story of gay activism at the company, while in his "nuanced" manner, he's insisted that cooptation by the corporations is a trap that will never lead to "liberation." Finally, Griffin has rejected, on theoretical grounds, any "post-gay" complacency: Various unpleasant episodes have suggested there's no basis for feeling the "struggle" is over.

Sanctioned by the academy, Griffin has presented himself as threatened—a neat trick, if you can "pull it off." But just in today's newspaper, I noticed a picture of the chortling trio of Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and David Geffen, which suggests that maybe Sean should, like, lighten up. The battle *is* over, and "we" must have "won"—otherwise, why would a "university press" publish a "work" of such complete "self-absorption?"

Fan-*tast*-ic!



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# Escape From Gotham

*by Edward B. Anderson*

**What I Think I Did:**
**A Season of Survival in Two Acts**
*by Larry Woiwode*
*New York: Basic Books; 312 pp., $25.00*

◆

When novelist Larry Woiwode moved to a house and a little piece of land just off State Highway 21 in the loneliest corner of North Dakota, he left behind the world of New York and the *New Yorker* for a part of America which, if it conjures any image in the coastal mind, is that of "flyover" land. Woiwode's time in North Dakota has been spent mostly on the business of living, but he has done some good writing as well. His most recent book, *What I Think I Did*, is an unusual memoir for which his last work, *Acts*, seems to have been an exploration of sorts. The book is part chronicle of a winter on his 300-acre ranch and farm (or "garden-patch" as his neighbors with more typically Western land-holdings call it), and part literary memoir. The narrative shifts back and forth between memories of Woiwode's college days and early years writing for the *New Yorker*, and scenes from the gritty day-to-day business of keeping livestock and family warm and fed during the long 1997 spring blizzard that will remain a vivid memory throughout the northern high plains for decades to come.

Woiwode has decided to heat his house and office-shed with a new wood-burning furnace that he has shipped in from more wooded parts. What might seem like an inexplicable decision to those who have seen western North Dakota has actually a bit more method than madness to it, for Woiwode has noticed the rows of dying shelterbelts and windbreaks planted over the decades by farmers. Trees, like all other living things, have natural lifespans; he plans to "cremate" those that have passed on, squeezing one more bit of sustenance out of the bleak high plains in the best tradition of his predecessors.

Facing falling, blowing, and deeply drifting snow rather than the typically cold but dry western Dakota winter, Woiwode finds himself troubleshooting the new furnace under trying conditions. He tells the story of each soldering, each leaking valve, and each buried pipeline, interspersing these with remembrances of his childhood and youth. As he begins to run out of wood to burn, everything becomes fair game in the struggle for warmth: junk, old furniture, boxes of books, dead chickens. Woiwode feeds the tangible mementos of his memories into the furnace the way that he has fed the raw material of memories into his fiction.

In the second half of the book, the North Dakota winter episodes become increasingly sparse as the author writes at length about his years in New York, his early stories, his first novel, and his encounters with such writers as Borges, Welty, Updike, Mailer, and Cheever. These intriguing events are stated simply, without a hint of embellishment. One of the most interesting episodes has to do with his friendship with a young unknown named Robert De Niro whom Woiwode met at the end of his brief acting career. In a succinct assessment of De Niro as character actor and friend, Woiwode describes him as "a chameleon that is trustworthy."

The title of his new book being a retrospective turn on that of his first novel, *What I'm Going to Do, I Think*, one wonders if Woiwode intends this latest literary production to be his last. Those who make their way through his novels to the memoir will find not only the accomplished novelist, but also the artist determined to live a life in addition to writing about it. Here is a man who reached a place in the New York literary world that many would-be writers would lie, cheat, and steal for. Yet he relinquished it, largely to give his children the gift of growing up near a ghost town in windswept western Dakota riding horses, running chainsaws, shooting pistols, and raising Rambouillets. As Woiwode turns again and again from his family's life on their farm to matter-of-fact narratives about the life of drugs, venereal diseases, violence, rape, and fear in 1960's New York, the value of this gift becomes plain. Ironically, Woiwode is still something of an outsider in spite of his North Dakota birth, a person the locals feel they need to look out for a little: sometimes affectionately, often uncomprehendingly, occasionally resentfully. His nearly adult children, on the other hand, move with ease through the winter, across the distances, within the community, and in their work. And the father depends on them.

One thing cannot go without mention. Woiwode pays a debt of gratitude to his friend, mentor, and editor at the *New Yorker*, William Maxwell, who often kept Woiwode sane, fed, and focused in a cold and lonely New York, while helping the younger man find his voice, his mind, and his story. More to the point, Maxwell helped Woiwode find them in time for the author to write the books he had to write and still live the life that writing those books made it possible for him to live. One senses that, without Maxwell, Woiwode might have written similar books and gone where he was going as a writer, but by a longer, more twisted path, one littered with more personal wreckage. Given the egotistical and insecure nature of most contemporary artists, who can give credit only when it can be served up as career-enhancing name-dropping, Woiwode's quiet, clear tribute is all the more remarkable.

His prose, at its best both spare and satiating, is nearly always at its best. Early in his career, Woiwode says, he had a glimpse of what he is after: "a prose trim enough to follow the swiftest physical action with ease, yet with enough substance to pull a passage below the page into a dimension a character might assume . . . and the ability, now and then, to spring into stratospheric reaches of far-flung thought." With a passing memory of his mother's mother "wobbling up in focus" and then appearing "in sunlit brilliance" as he worked at his desk in Manhattan, the author knew he had a story:

> I will write about her the way I've always felt I should write, as if my life depends on getting it right. Enough of fractured time and the grotesque and multiple viewpoints



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and trying what Beckett and Babel and Kafka have done as only they can do . . . just get down clear the slant of light on a woman who influenced me more than any of those writers.

The result was his first *New Yorker* story, the first of the stream of stories that led ineluctably to his novels.

To those who have read Woiwode's haunting masterpiece, *Beyond the Bedroom Wall* (and to have read the first pages is to have surrendered to the entirety), *What I Think I Did* allows a glimpse into what that effort meant. To call the book an account of what it means for a child to lose his mother is to trivialize it. To call it anything else is to trivialize what it means for a child to lose his mother. Like the east and west watersheds of the Continental Divide, for Woiwode there is a Before and an After. By returning to North Dakota, he has, in a way, returned to his mother and to the roots and the community her distant memory embodied for him:

> When my mother died the years in North Dakota tumbled into [a] trunk, because we had moved to Illinois the summer before, and her death was like a guillotine across them. They went falling in folds into their place in the trunk and its lid slammed shut. Her grave was a chasm, the spot where the guillotine struck, and when I tried to get to the other side by every imaginative leap I could devise, it didn't matter if I missed by a mile or an inch, a miss sent me into a dark darker than dreams.

For those who have made the journey with Woiwode through his novels, *What I Think I Did* will deepen their appreciation of his accomplishment in traversing the ridges and sloughs of deep memory to write books like *Beyond the Bedroom Wall*. Woiwode might say he could do no other—but that's not quite true, and we know it.

*Edward B. Anderson writes from Edmond, Oklahoma.*

## Oxymoron

**for Henry Vaughn**

*by Constance Rowell Mastores*

I would like to believe in the everyness
of things. In the universe and fiery stars.
In the warp-worlds. In the greater possibility
of that impossibility. In the huge seductiveness
burning outside my window. Every night
it winks at me. Every night, at odds, I stare at it
and write strange sentences on yellow tablets
that create their own kind of haphazard universe
upon the table. I read them like a Rorschach test.
I see windmills. I tilt at them. I tilt at the universe
burning outside my window, dare it to make me
believe, to walk right up to me and announce
itself—shake me by the shoulder. *There is*
*in God, some say, a deep, but dazzling darkness.*

## On Her Way

*by Jane Greer*

**Pursuit and Persuasion**
*by Sally S. Wright*
*Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers; 354 pp., $10.99*

◆

This is the third and newest book in Sally Wright's well-received "Ben Reese Mystery Series." The first two—*Pride and Predator* and *Publish and Perish*—drew rave reviews from the *Washington Times*, *National Review*, *Publishers Weekly*, and the redoubtable Ralph McInerny.

The new book's premise is intriguing. It's 1961. Elderly Scottish professor Georgina Fletcher leaves an Oxford pub with a tall, argumentative American. He puts something into her purse and stomps off. She reads it, goes back to her room, and writes a letter that she asks a friend to mail secretly should she, Georgina, die. The letter requests a private investigation into her death. The next day, Georgina dies at breakfast.

The letter is addressed to a young American, Ellen Winter, who takes it seriously. Ellen has the double good luck of being Georgina's heir and an apprentice to Dr. Ben Reese, the quiet, handsome, manly (I'm thinking Rod Taylor in *Hotel*), widowed archivist at Alderton University in Ohio. Reese, an amateur detective, just happens to be in Scotland. Ellen contacts him, and the two set about fulfilling Georgina's request.

Wright is thorough in her research and clearly familiar with Scotland. (The second book in this series is set there, too.) As Ben and Ellen engineer conversations with a large group of suspects, we learn a great deal about Scottish landscape, history, food, and culture, as well as the Scottish impression of Americans in 1961. Descriptions of Georgina's cen-



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turies-old estate and other locales are clear and enticing. Just for fun, Wright enlightens us on the subjects of falconry, tire manufacturing, microbiology, book collecting, and furniture restoration, as well as Samuel Johnson and New World explorers. Wright is sure-handed with her details and seems to know her stuff. So here we are, with an interesting murder, a romantic setting, lots of authentic local color, and a brainy, chivalrous hunk of a sleuth. This book should have been first-rate, but two problems keep it from being so.

One disappointment was that, in spite of a cast of angry characters and a lot of romantic set-ups, there is no flesh-and-blood passion here. I'm not talking about *sex*, necessarily; I'm talking about *intimacy*. Both the murder and the book are cerebral, detached, and cool. Now, Multnomah publishes what it calls "Christian living books" in numerous genres, and several reviewers on the Internet have referred to *Pursuit and Persuasion* as a "Christian novel." I'm not sure what that means, but if Wright *was* trying to write a "Christian novel"—and I haven't read that she was—it might explain the characters never transcending their own good manners.

And, okay, let's *talk* about sex for a minute. At least three women are interested in our hero, and he's interested in at least one of them, but no one ever lets on. In 354 pages, there's not one kiss, one sleepless night of longing, one inadvertent touch, or even an interesting *double-entendre*. The *Washington Times* compared Wright to Dorothy L. Sayers, but she isn't quite there yet. Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey, the politest and most Christian of sleuths, is also unabashed in his courtship of Harriet Vane. More than once, we glimpse a joyous, holy sexuality that the foppish Wimsey keeps on a very short leash. And with that glimpse, we anticipate that something grand is in store for us. Wimsey's controlled but evident sexuality makes him even more Christian, more manly, and more interesting. When Wright can do that with Ben Reese, she'll be off the porch and running with the big dogs.

A bigger problem with this book, however, is the lack of authoritative editing. Wright has high intelligence and a literate imagination, but she needs an editor to help her heed Faulkner's advice to writers: "Kill your precious darlings"; excise what doesn't belong, even if it's brilliant. (*Especially* if it's brilliant.) A more liberal use of the red pencil would have easily eliminated most of the obstacles to my loving this book. To wit: There is way too much painstakingly researched trivia. Many of the conversations are repetitive. There are too many suspects, too many characters, too many charming locales, and too many pages of Georgina's "poetry." Wright persists in using a distracting orthography to represent Scottish speech. And I don't know what the book's title means.

But enough grumbling. These flaws are irritating because the rest of the book deserves better. I liked it enough to order the first two novels the other day, and I think Sally Wright's just going to get better.

*Jane Greer writes from North Dakota.*

# Horror of Home

***by Bill Croke***

**Bruce Chatwin: A Biography**
*by Nicholas Shakespeare*
*New York: Doubleday; 618 pp., $35.00*

◆

Travel writing in the post-World War II era gradually became the prosaic stuff of Sunday newspaper supplements, nothing more than Baedeker-type guides to fancy hotels and chic restaurants in foreign capitals. Bruce Chatwin revived the classic traveling-by-the-seat-of-your-pants school, a genre historically practiced by worldly wandering Brits as disparate as Lord Byron, Richard Burton, and Graham Greene. The idea is that a travel book cannot be interesting unless the journey's destination is remote and desolate, and the going is hard, even dangerous.

"*Horreur du domicile*," said Baudelaire, and Chatwin took it to heart. After a stifling period in his early 20's working as an up-and-coming "numbering porter" at Sotheby's auction house in London (where he honed his prose style writing short catalogue entries of art objects), Chatwin's doctor warned him that his job was inaugurating a nervous breakdown and deterioration of eyesight and advised him to seek out "far horizons."

We have the dusty-booted, mud-caked details thanks to Nicholas Shakespeare's *Bruce Chatwin: A Biography*. At 618 pages, this well-written book is the probable last word on a writer who—despite authoring only a half-dozen books and dying of AIDS at 48—continues to cast a long shadow over all serious travel scribes. Today, glossy magazines such as *Outside* and *Sports Afield* feature articles by Chatwinesque wannabes swathed in Gore-Tex and chattering on cell phones in equatorial jungles or among Himalayan peaks. This high-tech version of Chatwin's rucksack method has become an advertising tableau in the pages of such magazines: Thanks to Bruce Chatwin, Patagonia may soon own Patagonia.

Chatwin was born in Sheffield, England, in 1940, the eldest of two sons of Charles Chatwin—a lawyer and war-time naval officer—and his wife, Margharita. True to his class, young Bruce was sent to boarding school at Old Hall in Shropshire, and then to Marlborough College. By his own admission, he was a poor student ("I was hopeless at school, a real idiot, bottom of every class") though an omnivorously well-read polymath who dabbled in literature, art, and archaeology. A school friend once described him as "a 19th-century dilettante"—one, that is, in the best sense of the word.

Chatwin's *modus operandi* in traveling was simple: Bring to an exotic locale erudition, an insatiable curiosity, and a sharp eye for the bizarre. Court hunger, illness, and exposure to the extremes of weather, as well as unpleasant adventures with local bureaucrats and cops resulting in short stints in jail or the paying of bribes. Like great travel writers before him, Chatwin seems to have been neurotically driven to escape himself and "the perversion of home." He was a lifelong bisexual who nevertheless enjoyed a 24-year, mostly happy marriage to the American Elizabeth Chanler (a union that withstood his sexual peccadilloes), and whose remote travels encouraged what has been called "sexual tourism."

Aimless wandering in Europe, Africa, and Central Asia in the late 60's and early 70's resulted in frustrated attempts at writing, producing only some forgettable magazine journalism and a turgid anthropological treatise titled "The Nomadic Alternative." Despite Chatwin's Herculean efforts, the latter never saw publication, though elements of it appeared in *The Songlines* (1987). From 1972 to 1975, Chatwin was a feature writer (specializing in travel) for the Sunday



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*Times* of London, where he came under the editorial wing of Francis Wyndham, a legend in British journalism. Chatwin ranged far, and in his reportorial wanderings interviewed Indira Gandhi and André Malraux (among others), all the while reinventing the travel genre. Remembering Hemingway's advice to a young writer to ditch journalism as soon as one can, Chatwin took a sabbatical in 1974, leaving Wyndham a terse note reading: "Gone to Patagonia."

It was Chatwin's long-held ambition to visit the sparsely populated, 800,000-square-mile amorphous region in the southern reaches of Argentina and Chile, ending at Tierra Del Fuego: the "Land's End" of the Americas. The fruit of his four-month sojourn was *In Patagonia* (1977), a potpourri of history, archaeology, anthropology, and paleontology, seasoned with his usual dollop of chaotic travel method. The book was an international bestseller and won its author numerous awards, including Britain's 1978 Hawthornden Prize. To this day, it inspires legions of less talented writers and ordinary trekkers clutching their dog-eared paperback copies, reinforcing the idea that the best way to cheapen a pristine place with commercialization is to write well of it.

Chatwin's late 70's trips to Brazil and West Africa resulted in the short novel *The Viceroy of Ouidah* (1980), an historical fiction whose main character is the real-life Francisco Felix De Souza, a rags-to-riches-and-back-to-rags figure involved in the 19th-century transatlantic slave trade. This dark novella has been compared to the works of Conrad.

In 1987, Chatwin published *The Songlines*, finally putting to good use his theory of nomads: that is, how certain tribes living in some of the world's most inhospitable places managed to endure, and even to thrive, for centuries as empires and nation-states crumbled around them. According to Nicholas Shakespeare, the aborigines of the Australian outback were for Chatwin "a structure on which to hang not only his nomad theories, but more or less everything else in his notebooks . . . whether [noted] in an Afghan bazaar, a Sudanese desert or a New York drawing room." The 80's also saw the publication of *On the Black Hill* and *Utz*, two novels that garnered critical acclaim.

At the same time, the author's growing fame encouraged his worst excesses. Sexual tourism resulted in an HIV-positive diagnosis in Zurich in 1986. Chatwin refused to accept it; until his death three years later, he steadfastly insisted that he was suffering a chronic infection caused by the bite of a "Chinese bat." During those years, Chatwin struggled to put together a collection of miscellaneous pieces called *What Am I Doing Here* (published posthumously), before dying in Nice surrounded by his wife and a few close friends.

*Bill Croke writes from Cody, Wyoming.*

# Kissing the Toad

***by Jeffrey Meyers***

**The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Picasso, Provence, and Douglas Cooper**
*by John Richardson*
*New York: Random House;*
*318 pp., $26.95*

◆

John Richardson, the brilliant biographer of Picasso, resembles (by his own account) those charming and attractive young men of limited means and boundless ambition—right out of the novels of Stendhal and Balzac—who use any means to make their way in the world. The son of an English soldier, educated at Stowe school and the Slade School of Art, Richardson was invalided out of the army in World War II. After failing as a painter, and with a trust fund of only $500 a year, he toiled away for a time as an industrial designer and journalist.

In 1949, when he was 25 years old, Richardson met Douglas Cooper, "a stout pink man in a loud checked suit." Cooper (1911-84), the homosexual son of an Australian tycoon who had made his fortune in gold and real estate, was obsessed with Picasso, Braque, Léger, and Gris, and had the finest collection of modern art in England. (It would now be worth about half a billion dollars.) A repulsive rotten pear of a man who looked for all the world like Henry Kissinger, Cooper was consumed with self-hatred and seemed to identify with the screeches, self-display, and wanton havoc of the peacocks that decorated the gardens of his lavish French château. A witty and clever connoisseur of art and artists, Cooper—who had hoped to see more amputees in postwar Germany—was a nasty piece of work. Both arrogant and sycophantic, he was also petty, malicious, spiteful, overbearing, greedy, and dishonest.

When someone displeased him, he would ring him up and shriek: "You filthy little sh--!" Ironically enough, this old scourge of the art world had, before Richardson revived him, been virtually forgotten. In a crucial passage, Richardson writes that, when they first returned to Cooper's house in a wasp-colored Rolls Royce and Cooper made the inevitable pass:

> Out of courtesy and curiosity, I lurched upstairs after him. . . . Alcohol overcame my initial revulsion. A kiss from me, I fantasized, would transform this toad into a prince. . . . However, Douglas turned out to be as rubbery as a Dalí biomorph. No wonder he was mad at the world. This realization triggered a rush of compassion, which enabled me to acquit myself on this ominous night. . . . For the next twelve years Douglas would play on my compassion, alternating cajolery with brute force, psychic cunning with infantile bellowing. The tension was often excruciating, but the . . . bond forged out of a passionately shared experience of works of art made it all worthwhile.

Richardson seems to have been driven less by compassion than by his desire for a hedonistic existence (back in London, after a luxurious trip to Holland, his "hitherto humdrum life became a round of pleasure") and, as the novelist Angus Wilson noted, by a "fixation on worldly success." To achieve these goals, Richardson forfeited his personal freedom and frequently suffered public humiliation. When he offered his own opinions on art, Cooper would scream: "How dare you pontificate to me about Léger!" and, as if he were a houseboy, order him to get their guests a drink.

The toad never turned into a prince, and Richardson certainly earned his keep. The biggest payoff was friendship with Cooper's friend Pablo Picasso. "For me this would be the greatest possible privilege," Richardson states, "and it would enable me, decades later, to embark on my biography of the artist with more insight and sympathy than would otherwise have been possible." Indeed,



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when he was working on a study of Picasso's portraits and going through hundreds of photographs with him, the artist "pointed out the iconographical complexities involved [and revealed] how certain images represented not only Dora Maar but also her predecessor, Marie Thérèse, as well as Lee Miller and Inez, the maid."

The Picasso that emerges from this book (foreshadowing the later volumes of Richardson's biography) is small and delicate, with unassuming courtesy and a radiant smile. He had to be surrounded by an entourage who believed in him and his work. He received or refused visitors, playing them off against each other in kingly fashion. When eating fried octopus, he would wipe his oily fingers on his bald pate to make his hair grow. He loved to get unusual gifts and generously gave away his own drawings. (Cooper kept all those given to both himself and Richardson.) Like a magician, Picasso could transform old rubbish into sculpture. His astonishing personal magnetism lasted right into his 90's, and he would feed on the energy of his followers and use it to fuel a night's work in his studio. Superstitious about the merest mention of death, he always remained an exile from Spain. Richardson describes him in the frontier town of Port Bou, "glowering at his beloved country, a few hundred yards away, which he had been unable to visit for almost twenty years and would never visit again."

Just as Fitzgerald observed that Hemingway "needs a new woman for each big book," so Dora Maar, one of Picasso's many mistresses, said that when the woman in his life changed, "virtually everything else changed: the style that epitomized the new companion, the house or apartment they shared, the poet who served as a supplementary muse, the *tertulia* (group of friends) that provided the understanding and support he craved, and the dog that rarely left his side." But Picasso devoured women like a minotaur. He reduced Dora to tears, long after he'd left her, by compelling her to show Richardson an old sketchbook that portrayed her sexual organs, reasserting his rights over her and turning her back into a tearful victim. After he'd left Françoise Gilot, he severely tested the limits of her successor's devotion. No matter how callously he treated Jacqueline Roque, "she referred to him as her God, spoke to him in the third person and frequently kissed his hands." After his death, she shot herself.

Richardson's fascinating, stylish, and perceptive portraits are etched with acid. Writer Bruce Chatwin wore "a supercilious smirk on his pretty face." Sir John Rothenstein, director of the Tate Gallery, was a toady and a smug chauvinist. Angus Wilson moved from writing catty short stories to turning out turgid *romans à thèse*. Henry Moore's assistants would blow up his "maquettes into something airport-sized, or shrink them into saleable Kleinkunst, or slice them, eye-catchingly, in half." The pain and degradation of Francis Bacon's imagery was based on "the violence that he challenged his lovers to inflict on his infinitely receptive body." Richardson, unable to resist even pulling down his idol, quotes Braque's clever but meaningless *mot*: "Picasso used to be a great painter. Now he is merely a genius."

No one has ever been subjected to more mythologizing and denigration than Hemingway. Richardson, professionally dedicated to establishing the truth, offers an eyewitness account of an event that supposedly took place during a *corrida* at Nîmes in the summer of 1959:

> As the band struck up the Marseillaise, we all stood. Suddenly Picasso laughed and pointed down at Hemingway. The author of Death in the Afternoon was standing rigidly to attention, his right hand up to his peaked cap in a military salute. When Hemingway looked around and saw that nobody else was saluting . . . he withdrew his hand and ever so slowly repositioned it in his pocket.

Richardson, having concluded from this incident that Hemingway's stories were spurious, proceeds to call the boring and pretentious Michel Leiris "a great writer."

The point of the anecdote is to show Richardson's intimacy with Picasso and the artist's superiority to the naively absurd Hemingway (an old and greatly respected friend of Picasso). The incident, however, seems out of character. Hemingway, having attended thousands of bullfights in France and Spain under the gaze of many eyes scrutinizing his behavior, would surely have known how to act when the national anthem was played. In fact, he was not even present at the *corrida* to which Richardson refers. In *The Dangerous Summer*, Hemingway's account of the bullfights of 1959, he wrote: "I love Nîmes but did not feel like leaving Madrid, where we had just arrived, to make such a long trip to see bulls with altered horns fought, so decided to stay in Madrid." And, since Richardson is such a smarty-pants, it's worth pointing out some other notable errors: Helena Rubinstein's first husband was Edward (not Horace) Titus; Connie Mellon was the ex-wife of a trustee (not the director) of the National Gallery in Washington; Brian Urquhart was Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs (not Secretary-General) of the United Nations; the Schatzalp (not the Waldhaus) Hotel in Davos inspired the sanatorium in Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*; Captain Cook was killed and eaten in Hawaii (not Tonga); and *Ferragosto* is not Italy's Fourth of July—the latter is a patriotic holiday, the former (the Feast of the Assumption on August 15), a religious one.

Richardson's 12-year connection with Cooper ended badly. When he decided to leave, having learned all he could from his mentor, he tried to recover his possessions before moving to New York. Cooper spitefully burned all of Richardson's clothes and papers, and refused to return the precious gifts he'd received from Picasso, Braque, and several other artists. There being no locks or burglar alarms at the château, Richardson raided the place, filled a car with his valuables, and drove off.

At one point in the book, Richardson compares Cooper to the English critic Cyril Connolly: "Whereas Douglas used his wit to wound, Cyril used his to seduce. Otherwise they were too alike—too bullied and bullying, bossy and babyish, vain and self-hating and fat—to stand each other for long." Reviewing Connolly's novel *The Rock Pool* (1936), about English expatriates in France, George Orwell defined the moral chasm between his own values and the hedonistic and decadent life that Connolly—like Cooper and Richardson—chose to lead: "even to want to write about so-called artists who spend on sodomy what they have gained by sponging betrays a kind of spiritual inadequacy."

*Jeffrey Meyers will publish, this fall, a life of George Orwell (Norton),* Privileged Moments: Encounters with Writers *(Wisconsin), and* Hemingway: Life into Art *(Cooper Square).*



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*by Samuel Francis*

## Capitalism the Enemy

By a margin of 63-56, the South Carolina House of Representatives voted on May 10 to pull down the Confederate battle flag that has fluttered above the state's capitol dome since 1962 and to remove it to "a place of honor" on the capitol grounds. The vote was the grand (or perhaps the petty) finale to a controversy that has lurked below the surface of South Carolina's politics for much of the last decade and has now begun to haunt the politics of other Southern states and, indeed, of the whole nation. Proponents of removing the Confederate flag argued that it is, in the immortal and typically stilted phrasing of a 1991 resolution of the NAACP, "an odious blight upon the universe," or, in the lesser eloquence of Sen. John McCain, "a symbol of racism and slavery." Supporters of the flag argued, generally, that it was not a symbol of racism and slavery, though they seemed to disagree as to what it actually does symbolize—states' rights, Southern independence, cultural tradition, or simply the martial virtues of honor, loyalty, courage, and willingness to sacrifice for a cause that most Americans associate with the Confederacy and its hapless warriors. Like all real symbols, the flag represents many different things, most of them intimately connected to each other in the enduring bond called "civilization." If the meaning of symbols could be translated into simple and clear language, there would be no need for symbolism at all.

The absence of a simple and clear slogan that encapsulates the real meaning of the flag, as opposed to the simple, clear, and false slogans that encapsulated its meaning for its enemies, may tell us a good deal about why the defenders of the flag lost and its foes prevailed, and it is ever thus in the continuing conflict between the forces of civilization and tradition, on the one hand, and barbarism, on the other. At no time since the French Revolution have the forces of tradition been able to enlist simplicity and clearness on their side, and the immense power that simplicity and clearness exert on the human mind is a major reason the enemies of tradition triumph. The power of tradition and its allies lies not in their ability to justify themselves through logic but in their capacity to mobilize those who remain attached to tradition; in a declining civilization, or one challenged by the enemies of tradition, that capacity will dwindle as the power of the challengers grows. So it was in South Carolina, where, as in most of the South, the memory of its traditions has been dwindling for the last century, even as the power of its enemies—simple, clear, and profoundly evil—grew.

The NAACP and nitwits like John McCain are by no means the most dangerous enemies of Southern traditions. The NAACP has been crusading against the Confederate flag since at least 1991, but only this year was its crusade successful. It is impossible to account for this victory without considering the immense assistance the NAACP received from the Republican Party and the "capitalism" before which the party loves to prostrate itself. If it's dangerous enemies you're looking for, those two will give you a fight to the death any day.

The unreliability of the Republicans on the flag has been manifest since at least the early 1990's (some would say since the 1860's), when South Carolina's Republican Gov. David Beasley violated a campaign promise he had made in 1994 not to try to remove the flag from the capitol dome. He soon gathered the support of Sen. Strom Thurmond, former Gov. Carroll Campbell, and the Christian Coalition. As it developed, a populist movement centered on defense of the flag stopped the Republican establishment. Governor Beasley—whom Christian Coalition leader Ralph Reed had boomed as a possible presidential candidate—was promptly bounced from office in the following election, largely because of his treachery over the flag issue.

The Republican betrayal in the earlier flag controversy was grounded in a lust to gain black votes (which never materialized), but in the most recent battle, it was compounded by greed and fear, which the NAACP cleverly managed to incite. The campaign against the flag was joined to the NAACP's national boycott of the state until the flag was removed from the capitol building, and since the boycott struck directly at the capitalist heart of the Republican Party (indeed, at capitalism itself), it was a far more efficacious tactic than simply threatening to vote against politicians who refused to remove the flag. By targeting the business elites who call the shots in the GOP (which has a majority in the South Carolina House) and the $14 billion tourist industry of the state, the NAACP actually struck at the heart of the modern South.

The role of Big Business in forcing the flag off the dome was clear at least as early as last year. In a report in the *New York Times*, Paula Harper Bethea, chairwoman of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, offered up most of the clichés put forward to justify removing the flag. "The shrinking world in which we live, the way technology has brought us together," Miss Bethea beamed, "has made us come to realize that we are not islands unto ourselves. If we're going to be part of the next millennium, we have to move that flag off our Statehouse dome and put it in a place of honor elsewhere." Of course, the reason the NAACP demanded its removal was that it claimed the flag is a symbol of racism and slavery, and if that were so, why on earth would anyone want to "put it in a place of honor elsewhere"? The statement made little sense, but what was driving it was not sensibility so much as the mere determination to make the controversy go away before it hurt business. Michelin Tire Company, which has constructed a new plant in South Carolina to replace the textile mills put out of business by free trade, was also "particularly vocal about the need to move the flag off the dome," the *Times* reported.

In Alabama, the same dynamic was evident. Neal Wade, of a group called the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama, told the *Times* that the Confederate flag had to go because "Anything that causes division within a state makes it less attractive to a potential employer, particularly from overseas," and the *Times* itself commented that "the pressure is even greater to join the global economy, and foreign employers do not want the slightest hint of a divided work force or a reputation for backwardness."

Conservatives—real conservatives, at least, not classical liberals or neoconser-



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vatives—should not be surprised. Capitalism, an economic system driven only, according to its own theory, by the accumulation of profit, is at least as much an enemy of tradition as the NAACP or communism, and those on the "right" who make a fetish of capitalism generally understand this and applaud it. The hostility of capitalism toward tradition is clear enough in its reduction of all social issues to economic ones. Moreover, like communism, capitalism is based on an egalitarianism that refuses to distinguish between one consumer's dollar and another. The reductionism and egalitarianism inherent in capitalism explain its destructive impact on social institutions. On the issue of immigration, capitalism is notorious for demanding cheap labor to undercut the cost of native workers. But it is not merely in contemporary America that it has done so.

The agribusiness proprietors of ancient Roman plantations imported slave labor for much the same reason, with the result that, by the end of the first century A.D., there were virtually no Romans, and not even many Italians, left in Italy, and so it has been throughout history. In South Africa, the main reason for the rejection of Prime Minister Verwoerd's project of *grand apartheid*, under which the black majority would acquire their own independent states, was that South African and global capitalists needed black labor to exploit and to drive down the wages of white workers. It was for that reason that the South African Communist Party in its early days actually supported apartheid or something like it, since the party was then largely composed of white, working-class members. Today, of course, not only does global capitalism demand the importation of cheap labor through mass immigration but also, through free trade, manages to export its own production facilities to whatever country contains cheaper labor. The capitalist Muhammad both goes to the mountain and has the mountain come to him.

Nor should it be surprising that the Republicans who control the House of Representatives in South Carolina bent in the direction of the capitalist wind, even at the risk of their own political careers and explicit previous commitments. House Majority Leader Richard Quinn actually burst into tears after voting to remove the flag. "My vote was very difficult," he whined to the press afterward. "It was the hardest vote I ever cast." As Mrs. Frances Bell, state chairwoman of the Council of Conservative Citizens, remarked after the vote, "Many legislators lied." Caught between the cultural and political rock that wanted the flag to be kept waving over the capitol and the capitalist hard place that demanded it be pulled down so the state could be part of the new millennium, be brought together by technology, join the global economy, and avoid the slightest hint of a divided work force or a reputation for backwardness, the Republicans chose modernity—and the betrayal of their state's traditional identity.

The spat over the Confederate flag in South Carolina may seem to most Americans a provincial imbroglio, but two facts combine to make it a matter of national significance. First, with the coming of a nonwhite majority in the United States because of mass immigration, there is every prospect that similar battles over other historic cultural symbols will take place. Indeed, some years ago in San Jose, California, the local city council authorized the construction of a statue of the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl in the city's main square, instead of a statue to the American soldier who occupied San Jose for the United States during the Mexican War. There are a number of other instances of similar acts of dispossession against traditional symbols, though none so far has quite compared to the NAACP's perpetual war against the Confederacy.

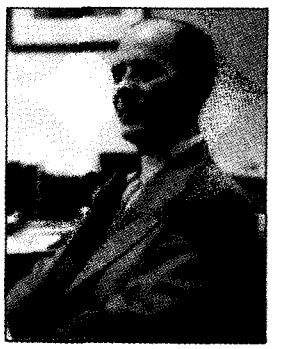
Second, even with the emergence of a nonwhite majority and its hatred of traditional American cultural symbols, it is the willingness of ostensibly "conservative" forces, like the Republicans and capitalism (organized religion, in the form of the mainstream churches, is yet another), to support the war against these symbols that makes the war important and dangerous. In the long run, of course, the war will not be confined to symbols but will extend to the people who have historically composed American civilization.

The betrayal of the Confederate flag by the Republicans and by the capitalism which so hypnotizes the GOP says plainly that neither institution can be counted on to defend either Southern traditions or national and civilizational ones. There are few traditional Southerners who did not already know this, although most have supported the GOP since the 1960's in what was an alliance of convenience for both sides, and most conservatives of all kinds have allied with capitalism against this century's more militant forms of egalitarianism. But the Republican infatuation with capitalism, and the disengagement of capitalism from every other social institution in pursuit of its own profits and in antagonism to any institution that presents an obstacle to profit, pitches the usefulness of these alliances into the garbage dump of history. C


# Where No Flag Flies

## Donald Davidson and the Southern Resistance

***Mark Royden Winchell***



This seminal work offers a complete narrative of Davidson's life with all of its triumphs and losses, frustrations and fulfillments. Drawing upon a wealth of previously unpublished archival material, including Davidson's letters and diary, *Where No Flag Flies* provides unique access to one of the most original minds of the twentieth-century South.

**August, 392 pages, 25 illustrations, $29.95**

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# Letter From Northern Italy

*by Mario Marcolla*

## Poe, Henry Adams, and an Alliance of Christendom

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An interior bond ties me to America, where one of my grandfathers is buried. He tried the adventure of emigration, without ever rooting himself in a regular job and without managing to send a penny to the family in Italy, until he died almost certainly in an almshouse. My other grandfather crossed the Atlantic in 1902. He was a lumberman in Michigan, and afterward went to New Jersey to work as a miner. From 1906 to 1912, my father attended elementary school in Trenton and then returned to Trentino, Italy, with his mother and a sister who had been born in the United States. In 1920, the family was united again, even poorer than when they left for America, because the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had destroyed the entire value of their savings on deposit with the Bank of Vienna.

I bring up these personal matters in order to show that the destinies of men are always interconnected, that our vocations stem from the experiences of our own fathers and forefathers. America has always been in my heart, and for that reason I have studied the history of the United States in colonial times, as well as 20th-century American conservatism.

On the cultural plain, the bonds between Italy and the United States in the 1850's were very strong, the few Italians living in America notwithstanding. American poets and philosophers kept Italy in mind as an historical example and a source for European literature.

Edgar Allan Poe was the first American reviewer of the English edition of the great romance of our best writer of the 19th century: Alessandro Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi*, which had the title *The Betrothed* in the United States. Poe wrote his poems and tales as he traveled from Richmond to the Northeast; but though the landscape was American, Poe's mind ran to Europe, above all to Italy, as we see in his poem "The Coliseum":

> Type of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary
> Of lofty contemplation left to Time
> By buried centuries of pomp and power!
> At length—at length—after so many days
> Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst
> (Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,)
> I kneel, an altered and an humble man
> Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
> My very soul thy grandeur, gloom and glory!

The poet asks the ruins whether their lesson is lost forever:

> "Not all" the Echoes answer me—"not all!
> Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever
> From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
> As Melody from Memnon to the Sun.
> We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule
> With a despotic sway all giant minds.
> We are not impotent—we pallid stones,
> Not all our power is gone—not all our fame—
> Not all the magic of our high renown—
> Not all the wonder that encircles us—
> Not all the mysteries that in us lie—
> Not the memories that hang upon
> And cling around about us as a garment,
> Clothing us in a robe of more than glory."

In "To Helen," Poe recalls the past of our common civilization:

> Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
> To the glory that was Greece,
> And the grandeur that was Rome.

While Poe lived out his sad existence, another American, the philosopher and polemicist Orestes Brownson, was going through a spiritual journey from Emerson's transcendentalism through Robert Owen's socialism and all the way to the Catholic Church. Brownson chose as his teacher and inspiration one of the greatest Italian philosophers of the 19th century: the Abbot Vincenzo Gioberti, born in Turin in 1801. The Italian scholar served as a political inspiration in the heated discussion that began in those years regarding the *Risorgimento*, or the unification of Italy as a nation. Gioberti proposed to create a confederation of states in Italy under the leadership of Pope Pius IX, the *bête noire* of mid-19th century European revolutionaries.

I mention Edgar Allan Poe and Orestes Brownson to show that the cultural relations between our countries were very close. Italy was still a creator of universal culture. Gioberti expressed the significance of Italy in a famous book titled *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani—About the Moral and Civil Supremacy of Italians*. This supremacy has been, in the second half of the 20th century, one of the pillars of the thought of our greatest philosopher (my mentor and friend), Augusto Del Noce. Del Noce was the author of many works, including *The Suicide of Revolution* (1978) and his masterpiece, *The Problem of Atheism* (1964). In the last ten years of his life (he died in 1989), when Soviet communism was collapsing, Del Noce saw the need to establish a European balance of power and friendship between East and West. Russia had to be accepted in our common tradition and must not be humiliated. The opposite, in fact, is happening today, as globalism sweeps away historical and intellectual diversities and identities, homogenizing all people under the shield of a West that we do not know anymore.

Some of these developments were anticipated by Henry Adams, who, at the end of the 19th century, foretold the events of the 20th century with great vision. Particularly insightful are his letters



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during the years when William Jennings Bryan was waging his unsuccessful campaign for a different, non-imperialist America.

On June 5, 1895, he wrote to his brother Brooks from Washington: "I fear Russia much! Why can one never penetrate that polar mystery? . . . Our true point of interest is not India but Russia, yet Russia is impenetrable, and any intelligent man will deal with her better the less closely he knows her." In September 1895, writing to Brooks from Paris, he foretold the disintegration of Western civilization "with Russia for the eccentric on one side and America on the other," outlining an analogy with the decline of the Roman Empire. In a letter to Elizabeth Cameron from Venice on July 15, 1896, Adams again wrote about the decay of the Roman Empire:

> [M]y brother Brooks and I . . . have been greatly exercised by the fact that the Roman Empire, one day, about the year 400, dropped to pieces without any apparent cause. It "decaded." . . . Yet it showed very curious energy for a corpse. It adopted a new and very strong centralized religion just at that time. At Byzantium, which happened to survive, Justinian, a hundred years later, codified the law in a way which still serves as the foundation of European jurisprudence. He also built the church of S. Sofia, in an entirely new form of architecture which is still our admiration. The empire did many other things not usual for corpses to do, and among the rest, built Ravenna, which was the reason I wanted to see it.

In January 1904, he wrote: "I am half crazy with fear that Russia is sailing straight into another French revolution which might upset all Europe and us too." The prophecy came true and plunged European and world politics into a bloody civil war from 1917 until 1989.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the revolutionary theories have been revealed—not as mistakes, but as lies. A new relationship must be established, binding America, Europe, and Russia (all large Christian entities) in friendship and peace. Instead, NATO has expanded into Eastern Europe, leaving Russia humiliated and threatened. NATO has also changed from a defensive pact to an offensive one, as we saw last year with the terrible bombing of Serbia, the faults of that nation notwithstanding.

Russia has always been a rampart against the menace of barbaric Asia: the Mongols of Genghis Khan in the 12th century, the hordes of Tartars and Mongols of Tamerlane in the 14th century. In the following centuries, Russia defended Europe from the Muslim menace in the Caucasus.

Now that the revolutionary ideologies have fallen, Europe, America, and Russia have a common future which does not rest on Atlanticism but on the solid ground of the American plains, the numerous nations of old Europe, and the dignified civilization of Russia, which has produced the universal culture of Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Soloviev, and Florenskij.

While globalism is creating a general nihilism, we must respond by offering the historical memory of the old frontiers of our civilization: Tennessee, Scotland, l'Ile de France, Swabia, Sicily, Serbia, Poland, Muscovy, and hundreds of other diversities that enrich the tradition of our Christian world.

*Mario Marcolla is a former correspondent for* Avvenire *and* Osservatore Romano.

# Letter From South Carolina

*by Clyde Wilson*

## Dixie Choppers

◆

The Confederate flag, which had been in a place of honor (though not sovereignty) above the South Carolina capitol for almost 40 years, was removed in the stealth of the night of June 30/July 1.

The removal was made possible because all but a handful of Republicans in the legislature, who had pledged not to touch the flag, showed the white feather and accepted, as Republicans are wont to do, a "compromise." Curiously, the GOP members had a change of heart right after the filing deadline for primary opposition had passed.

A Confederate flag (a version other than the universally familiar one) will supposedly now be flown next to a monument on the capitol grounds, while the state will build an African-American monument and establish a Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. And, in a provision kept quiet by the legislators and media until the last moment, Confederate flags will be removed from the legislative chambers, where they have hung from time immemorial.

It is not a compromise, because the NAACP has not lifted its boycott of the state. Though more than the customary payoffs were made to get the "compromise" through, the Black Caucus has already declared war against the flag that is to go on the monument. The bottom line is that the Republican leadership had a chance to say "No" to political correctness in a way that would have garnered international attention—and they chickened out.

Perhaps the only surprise is that they held out as long as they did, given the pressures brought to bear. The President of the United States visited us and told us that people who honor the Confederate flag are backward-looking and should seek a better life. Given the source, we have some doubts about exactly what was meant by a "better life." But we were not in doubt when he likened those who honor the rebel banner to Serbs: We know what happened to them.

Students rioted at the University of Washington and burned our flag. Apparently, they were aroused to passion after an Asian-American student wrote a defense of the flag in the campus rag. Southerners have always been at a tremendous disadvantage in these matters. It would never occur to us to tell people in Washington State what to do. Why, we can go for months without even thinking of them. But they sure are concerned about us.

Of course, they are naturally righteous against our notorious racial oppression. We are known sinners who always need correction, and they are just the folks to do it. This excuse worked better 40 years ago. Has anybody noticed lately that the most segregated states are Massachusetts, New York, and Illinois? Or that there is a net migration of black Americans back to the South?

A Southerner may be forgiven for suspecting that there is something going on here that does not have much to do with objective conditions. We might even



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suspect there is a little something psychologically wrong with people whose lives seem to revolve around correcting other people who live at a distance. It is not a part of *our* regional character, but it definitely is of theirs.

Surfing the net during the controversy, I came across a diatribe against our flag by a certified academic. According to this learned gentleman (and he is rather typical), the South is a demonic culture responsible for all the evils of the known world. He is alarmed that "the Southern gun culture," as typified by the Oklahoma City bombing, is in danger of taking over the whole country.

Now, let's see. A weirdo from New York, trained as a killer by the U.S. government, comes to the South and blows up several hundred people. Ah, the evil "Southern gun culture" at work again. Doubtless, the Unabomber from Harvard and Berkeley is just one more example.

It's an old story. The abolitionists proclaimed the depravity of Southerners and their own whiteness of soul while they were financing looting and killing on a mass scale in Missouri. In films, the dangerous killer has a Southern accent, of course. The facts are that most of the notorious mass murderers of recent years have been Yankees who roamed the South for their victims, like that nice Mormon boy, Ted Bundy. Yes, what an ideal place America would be if we could just finish wiping out those Rebs!

No doubt the 150,000 Yankees who move to South Carolina every year are braving the perils out of unselfish dedication to missionary work. In fact, I'll bet the academic mentioned above would jump at the chance to labor at enlightenment in one of our colleges.

We Southerners are, in many ways, a simple people. We like to think of ourselves as Americans and don't even notice the hate we get. Many of the turncoats in the legislature blathered at length about their dedication to the United States. That misguided sentiment, and a vague (and false) hope that removal of the flag would enhance racial conciliation, were the only decent motives involved in their betrayal.

If it is difficult to see what the Republican leadership hoped to gain (although visions of federal judgeships and assistant secretaryships in the Bush administration danced in many heads), it is easy to see what the NAACP got out of the controversy. Formerly wracked by debt and leadership scandals, it is now riding with full coffers and great momentum. Its leaders don't see the "compromise" touted by Republican leaders: They see victory.

I will bet that the campaign against Confederate symbols is building toward a demand for reparations for slavery. You heard it here first: After the elections, expect a Democratic bill for ten billion dollars a year for ten years. The Republicans will compromise with nine billion dollars and federal gun confiscation.

The public obsession with the domestic servitude that existed in this country (and others) up until a century and a half ago has reached the dimensions of Bolshevik indoctrination. The National Park Service is now de-emphasizing battles at its battlefield parks and emphasizing slavery. That slavery was the most important issue in American history, or even the most important issue in the War of Southern Independence, would astonish Lincoln, Grant, and Sherman.

Yet the victory in the banishing of the rebel banner from honor in South Carolina does not go to African-Americans or even to their official leaders. It goes to the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, which spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and carried out a lobbying campaign of vicious intensity over a period of years.

The state Republican Party, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Chamber of Commerce, doubtless hopes to make the best of the situation, expecting that the NAACP will get the blame and that the voters will forget the GOP's betrayal. They are politicians, and politicians (unlike statesmen) always look at short-range benefits, the next poll, and the next brown bag of cash. The GOP, however, may be surprised. A Republican governor has already been kicked out for betraying defenders of the flag, and in a non-binding referendum, over 70 percent of Republicans voted not to remove the flag. The most popular bumper sticker in South Carolina now is "No Votes for Turncoats," followed by "Take it Down" (next to a picture of the Stars and Stripes).

Our flag was not only international news but a major issue in the presidential campaign comedy. Of course, Al Gore is against us, though he comes (nominally) from a state replete with Confederate observances and symbols. The statesmanlike Mr. Bush opined that the flag was a matter for South Carolinians alone to decide, which allowed him an easy victory in the primary. Traditionalists and pro-flag people, however, don't trust Bushes and were poised to vote for Alan Keyes. Two or three days before the election, in a move obviously orchestrated to benefit Bush, Keyes attacked the flag and Bob Jones University, leaving the field open to the governor from Connecticut (er, Texas).

Regarding the sincerity of Mr. Bush's neutral position on the flag, let me mention merely that Bush's number one campaign man in South Carolina is the same fellow who has headed the massively funded, pro-business anti-flag campaign for the past several years.

But the real comic relief was provided by Senator McCain, who, like many more prominent Americans than are willing to admit it, has Confederate ancestors. His position was that he understood why people honor the flag, implying that it was okay with him. After the election, he made a special trip back to tell us that he had lied to help his chances in the primary, and that the flag of the Confederacy is evil and must be banished (as if anybody cares what he thinks). The comedy is heightened when you realize, which he apparently did not, that his lie did not help him at all because the Bush people had made sure his real opinion was widely circulated.

So our legislators have agreed with those who say that our flag is a symbol of hate. They caved in to pressure, but this is what Republicans do. Remember how Nixon campaigned against the Democrats, and then adopted all of their programs and their unpopular war? You can no doubt recall your own favorite Republican treason against conservative voters.

We made a mistake in allowing the politicians to frame the issue as merely one of "heritage." Heritage can be acknowledged in one place as well as another. Those of us who wanted to keep our flag where we could see it every day did so because we realize that the bloody St. Andrew's Cross has not so much to do with history, the Civil War, or slavery. It is, rather, the most potent symbol in the world today of a spirit of resistance to all that is summed up by the label "New World Order"—and it is universally recognized as such.

The showboating mayor of Charleston organized a march from the sea to the capitol to protest the flag, with various sports figures and other celebrities. It was a media event, with only three people ac-



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tually marching, although crowds were brought out for the cameras. The "marchers" reached the capitol and held their rally in front of 400 people, reported in the media as 2,000. On the other side of the capitol, pro-flag people gathered, about 400 of us, reported by the media as 200. (We were at a disadvantage because it was a workday.) The press missed, of course, the real news—the real history being made. On the pro-flag side, two dynamic, articulate black men spoke out *for* the flag! Meanwhile, on the anti-flag side, a bunch of pasty old politicians and academics mumbled their leftist incantations.

*Clyde Wilson is a professor of American history at the University of South Carolina.*

# Letter From Rome

*by Alberto Carosa*

## Gay Pride Week in the Eternal City

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The European Union has reiterated its appeal to all member states to press ahead with the legalization of homosexual unions, but resistance to the homosexual agenda is growing—especially in Italy.

The recently deposed government of Massimo D'Alema had proposed to prohibit discrimination based on "sexual orientation." Persons or groups violating this law would have faced up to four years in prison. It is not difficult to identify the targets of this legislation: conservative groups ranging from Associazione Famiglia Domani to Tradition, Family, Property, and all those who promote a sound natural and Christian order. The foremost target is the Catholic Church, which since her inception has promoted good and discriminated against evil.

A worldwide Gay Pride Week gathering is scheduled to take place in Rome in July as a counter to the Church's Jubilee Year. Rome Mayor Francesco Rutelli earmarked a substantial amount of taxpayers' money for this event. But the recent regional election, in which the center-right Freedom Front "Polo" defeated the D'Alema-led center-left coalition, has changed things. The newly elected president (governor) of Lazio, Rome's region, called for the march to be postponed until next year out of respect for the sacredness of the Holy Year. The intentions of the gay-pride organizers were expressed on May Day, when tens of thousands of people rallied under the supervision of hard-line leftist unions and parties in Piazza Navona, one of Rome's most beautiful squares, to proclaim the rights of, among others, the unemployed, immigrants, homosexuals, and the homeless. A participant had painted the massive Victor Emmanuel monument with a graffito saying, "We're gonna burn down this Jubilee of yours."

Italian conservative and religious groups have addressed an open letter to Al Gore, expressing their concern that he has granted his official support to the worldwide Gay Pride Week in his capacity as U.S. Vice President. They called upon him to reconsider, respectfully asking that he either demand of the event's sponsors a commitment to prohibit any public gestures in defiance of morals and decency, or withdraw his endorsement.

The backbone of the resistance to the homosexual movement is not located in opposition political parties but in grassroots groups, which are exerting increasing pressure on moderate-conservative politicians to honor their electoral pledges. The moderate conservatives won an overwhelming consensus by promising to uphold natural and family values; they are now being asked to translate words into action. These grassroots organizations have good leverage at the moment, since the general elections are due in less than a year and politicians are highly sensitive to their re-election.

But even if we are successful in putting off the gay-pride march, we will have only won a battle, not the war. We cannot fully reverse the course of the radical homosexual agenda overnight. As one of the masters of the counterrevolution, Plinio Correa de Oliveira, wrote in *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, "The Revolution . . . uses its metamorphoses not only to advance but also to carry out the tactical retreats that have so frequently been necessary."

While in Stockholm two years ago for the First World Cities Conference Against Drugs under the aegis of ECAD (European Cities Against Drugs), which is probably the world's leading organization in fighting illicit drug use, I was struck by a passionate speech by an Australian deputy mayor, Warren Woodley. With regard to an effective war on drugs, he said, "We must raise the flag of truth to the world and take down the white flag of surrender." With regard to the homosexual movement, we must also take down the white flag of surrender and keep on fighting until the end because we fight for the truth. In the long run, the truth will not simply win, but triumph.

*Alberto Carosa, the editor of* Famiglia Domani Flash, *writes from Rome.*

# Letter From Corporate America

*by John Freeman*

## At Ford, Diversity Is Job One

◆

The chairman of Ford Motor Company, Jacques Nasser, in a videotaped address to a group of top executives forced to endure another in a series of "diversity-training" seminars, stated that he did not like the sea of white faces in the audience and that one of his prime directives was to ensure that in the future, our company would reflect the broad spectrum of customers that we serve. In case the point had not been driven home with sufficient clarity, a new compensation plan was unveiled, under which management pay plans would be tied to the promotion and nurturing of "minorities." At this time, the Ford definition of "minority" is broad enough to include women, black, Hispanic, "Native American," and most foreign employees (as long as they are "persons of color"), but far too narrow to include decorated or disabled war veterans, American blue-collar factory workers, or white men with Ph.D.'s in engineering. It is still unclear what the appropriate reaction should be from an aspiring Caucasian industrial captain: Resign in shame in the name of racial "equality" to make room for the "victims"? Ignore the best and brightest candidates in order to fill a quota, but at least bring home the "minority-bonus" bacon? Or, like an old soldier, just fade away into some obscure corporate backwater?



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The answer, at least so far, seems to be all three. Older plant supervisors, technical specialists, field representatives, and design engineers, having faced the prospect of indentured servitude to an endless parade of upwardly mobile but clueless "managers," are leaving as soon as the ink dries on early retirement and severance packages. This talent drain has resulted in the outsourcing of critical technical and skilled consultative jobs to employment agencies filled with contract laborers—often the very people who were forced out! The major difference, of course, is that this new underclass has no benefits and can be released on a moment's notice. The only drawback is that this disposable workforce has questionable loyalty to the mother company. In an industry which frequently requires three years to bring a product from "concept to job one," it is unclear what the long-term quality consequences of such a labor pool will be. It may not take that long to find out: 1999 marked the first time in over a decade that Ford trailed both General Motors and Chrysler in the race for quality.

Still, the indignities suffered by "for-hire" specialists pale in comparison to those inflicted upon Ford employees who try to stay on in "soft-skill" managerial positions reserved for minorities and young guns whose main promotion potential seems to be their willingness to uproot themselves and their families every 18 months to pursue careers in "overseas assignments" and experience the full range of Ford's global empire. Unfortunately, one-and-a-half years is a grossly inadequate amount of time to learn the fundamentals of most new assignments, so more experienced employees are asked to train their own replacements. Worse, this new breed of worker is never held accountable for performance, since any undesirable "metrics" can be attributed to the previous transient, passed on to the next executive gypsy, or, in an unusually Machiavellian twist—even by corporate standards—blamed on the career specialists who "wrote the book" but who, apparently, are no longer able to read it.

Thus, older workers are encouraged to resign or face unpleasant consequences. One tactic involves a forced move to an undesirable geographic location which will maximize the burden on family life: for example, away from an ancestral home, an ailing elderly parent, or a second business. This may mean giving up a spouse's career or moving school-age children in midterm. Less subtle harassment techniques include denied vacation requests, overwhelming workloads, and frequent public insults. Company-car privileges are revoked. Pay raises and promotions for such people are nonexistent. While demotions are less common, they certainly can be used to devastating effect on particularly hard cases. Over time, frustration and monetary inflation will ensure the extinction of this species.

And to what end? So it can be honestly advertised to the world that at Ford, diversity is job one? To prove that Ford is no longer an American company but a business citizen of the New World Order? To destroy the very fiber of a culture that built such automotive icons as the Model T, the Thunderbird, and the Mustang? This company was never perfect, and even a casual observer of its product line and social history can point to some spectacular failures. But, whatever his faults, Henry Ford left an indelible and largely positive stamp on the face of our country and the "car culture" that we as Americans so passionately embrace. This is still a proud company, steeped deeply in tradition and lore. The legend of its founder's genius still stirs admiration and awe, even among the new elite. But I can't help thinking that something irreplaceable has been lost in the current zeal to transform this company from a family-run business into a faceless global giant devoid of any sense that Ford is fundamentally an *American* institution. I wonder what "Uncle Henry" would think?

There's no question what Mr. Nasser thinks. A Lebanese-born, internationally educated "renaissance man" who does not hesitate to recount the cultural bigotry he suffered as a student, he has seen the future, and it is not American (or European, for that matter). It's a global village, and the idiots come in all colors. Too bad all the profits come from one continent. The title of an *Automotive News* article pretty much says it all: "N.A. profits save day for Ford." It should be obvious by now that, setting aside the disastrous social consequences, Nasser's strategy doesn't work on the business level. But Ford's been pouring money into South America and Europe for years, so the payoff *must* be just around the corner, and the ongoing expense of carrying these perennial losers can always be financed through job cuts in the States! After all, it only took *eight years* and a few billion dollars to turn Jaguar around. Flush with cash, Ford has invested heavily in various prestigious European and Japanese marquees (Volvo, Aston-Martin, Mazda, and Jaguar) while simultaneously outsourcing every conceivable subassembly of U.S. vehicles to Mexico, Canada, and South America in order to reduce the costs (and in most cases the quality) of the parts in what are now American cars in name only.

The irony of this situation is that Ford survived the Japanese, labor strikes, gas shortages, government regulations, and the Edsel, but it may not survive the "leadership" of the current board of directors. The only real hope would be some kind of shareholder revolt (ideally led by the Ford family) based on the pathetic performance of the outstanding stock. Reacting to a heavy reliance on the North American truck market (and possibly to the European and South American follies mentioned above), and suspecting that the boom is over, investors have been dumping Ford stock for some time now, causing a precipitous decline in share prices (23 percent over the last year). But while poor stock prices might cause the ouster of the current CEO, in all likelihood his successor, groomed in the new tradition of "go global or die," would simply carry out the tragic policies established by his predecessor. Whatever its financial success, that's a sad legacy indeed for the *new* Ford Motor Company, and the beginning of the end for a once-great car company, because a legend grows best on its own soil.

*John Freeman works for Ford.*

## LIBERAL ARTS

### DEFENSE POLICY FOR A NEW MILLENNIUM

"As I considered [the Great Wall] . . . on a recent trip to China, I was struck by the colossal waste of human energy and intelligence it symbolizes. To build a wall only to keep the rest of the world out, to divide China from the whole of the human family—how much better to have applied that ingenuity to bridges of commerce rather than walls of isolation! Despite its architectural magnificence, the Great Wall is . . . a great monument to statism."

—*from* Acton Notes *(May 2000), the newsletter of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty*



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## Peking, the White House, and Wall Street Versus Main Street

*by Srdja Trifkovic*

In the last week of May, the Clinton administration successfully pressed Congress into granting China permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status as part of a recently negotiated trade pact. With that vote—the result of an unholy alliance between the GOP and the White House—American legislators have given up their annual review of Peking's conduct, surrendering all congressional leverage over China policy. At a time when the balance of foreign policy decisionmaking has already shifted too far in favor of the executive branch, the Republican-controlled Congress has voted itself into inconsequence on an issue that is important to this country's interests.

PNTR status for China was neither merited nor necessary. It is against the U.S. national interest. The members of Congress who supported PNTR were effectively siding with corporate special interests against American workers and consumers. The White House, Peking, and Wall Street were allied against ordinary Americans for several reasons: The Clintonites' motives will become fully known only when the next campaign fundraising scandal hits the headlines; the Chinese government wanted PNTR as a means of unconditional, unlimited, and permanent access for Chinese-made goods into the U.S. market; and American-based multinational corporations wanted PNTR because it would facilitate relocating production to China and exporting products back to the United States.

The damage to American interests will come from cheap labor, almost nonexistent environmental controls, and low taxes, which make China an ideal relocation site. Big corporations love the fact that independent trade unions are illegal in China, and that manufacturing wages average 20 cents per hour and go as low as 13 cents per hour. Their real interest is not in selling things in China, because only a narrow stratum of its political and business elite has meaningful spending power by Western standards. But PNTR ensures that these U.S. multinationals have unconditional, permanent access to the American market, to sell to us goods still "Made in the U.S.A."

In the aftermath of the PNTR's passage, the websites of American multinational corporations verily gushed about turning the People's Republic into a low-wage production base. Procter-Gamble, Motorola, and Westinghouse state openly on their sites that they plan to substitute Chinese parts for the American-made ones they currently send to China to put into finished goods. The predictable result will be a loss of high-wage American manufacturing jobs. Companies such as General Electric, Kodak, Dow Chemical, and Ingersoll-Rand have indicated that they will supply the U.S. domestic market with exports from their Chinese factories.

Supporters of China's WTO and PNTR agenda typically assert that the jobs lost to trade with China are low-skill, low-wage positions, while expanding exports to China will create high-wage U.S. jobs. But China is moving beyond labor-intensive goods. Between 1992 and 1999, high-tech products more than tripled as a share of China's exports to the United States, to 14.5 percent; they rose more than 32 percent last year alone. In contrast, American high-tech products rose only from 34.5 percent to 35.9 percent of our total exports to China, and they fell 18 percent in absolute terms in 1999. Now, thanks to PNTR and planned investments by Cisco, 3Com, Lucent, Microsoft, United Technologies, Motorola, and Texas Instruments, American and world markets will be flooded with high-tech Chinese goods: broadband routers, telecommunications switches, semiconductors, servers, software, and aerospace engine parts.

Wall Street's attack on America's manufacturing base is accompanied by a similar disregard for our national security. China is able to gather our dual-use military research-and-development secrets almost at will. Lockheed Martin stands accused by the State Department of 30 violations of the Arms Export Control Act and International Traffic in Arms Regulations for selling advanced-missile technology to the People's Republic. U.S. defense corporations McDonnell Douglas (Boeing), Lockheed Martin, Loral Space (Lockheed), and Hughes Electronics (General Motors) are either under indictment, awaiting indictment, or under current investigation by the Justice Department for illegally passing rocket and satellite technology to China.

In the run-up to the vote, President Clinton insisted that PNTR "creates a win-win result for both countries." He argued that exports to China "now support hundreds of thousands of American jobs" and that "these figures can grow substantially with the new access to the Chinese market the WTO agreement creates." In fact, U.S. multinationals have turned from net exporters to China to net exporters *to the United States*, a gap that will only widen and contribute to the growing U.S. trade deficit. Already the trade deficit with China is some $70 billion. In 1999, the United States imported approximately $81 billion in goods from China and exported $13 billion—a six-to-one ratio of imports to exports that represents the most unbalanced relationship in the history of U.S. trade.

PNTR was not even necessary for the attainment of Mr. Clinton's stated objectives. Even without granting it, U.S. exporters still would have obtained the potential trade benefits of China's entry into the WTO under the 1979 U.S.-China Agreement. Thus, claims by the administration that U.S. exports would not have qualified for significant tariff cuts after China's WTO entry, or that U.S. businesses would still face domestic content or performance requirements, are simply not true.

The United States had nothing to lose by maintaining the annual review and taking a "trust but verify" approach to trade with China. But now, the United States stands to lose plenty: its trade enforcement tools and the leverage of the annual congressional review of China's behavior. PNTR should not have been withheld on the grounds of "human rights" violations: That would necessitate curtailing trade with all oil producing nations in the Middle East, among others. It should have been opposed, however, on the grounds of protecting the U.S. national interest, preserving what remains of the American industrial base, and reducing American trade deficits. But the GOP, the Clinton-Gore White House, and Wall Street are not motivated by such old-fashioned concerns.

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GUNS

# Ladies Against the Constitution

*by Philip Jenkins*

On balance, would you say you are for or against gun violence? How about motherhood? Pro or con? How about keeping firearms away from children? I know that these are all contentious debates nowadays, and that most of us have to think awfully hard before deciding such questions. Somehow, though, I suspect that a decent majority of us have nagging doubts about the desirability of preteen firefights, at least on school premises.

Now, you may think that these imaginary survey questions are ludicrous, and anyone framing a debate in such a way was simply joking. If you think so, then you clearly were not watching the media coverage of the so-called "Million Mom March" which kept the chattering classes busy during a slow news week this past May. The Marching Moms claimed just to be seeking "responsible" and "sensible" gun laws, which meant registration of all guns and licensing of all owners, "just like cars and drivers," as well as built-in gun locks and "childproofing" weapons. These measures were intended to stop the gun "epidemic," which reputedly claims the lives of 12 children a day in the United States. Forsaking the slightest nod toward objectivity, pretty much the entire mass media portrayed the march's issues in the terms chosen by the group's organizers, who appeared repeatedly in sycophantic television interviews, unchallenged by speakers from any rival perspective. Since the issue was simply one of keeping guns away from kids, there obviously was nothing valid to be said on the other side. Typical of press coverage was the *New York Times*' headline, "Mothers March to Assail Gun Violence." "Mothers sound their call," boasted the *Boston Globe*.

Aging boy wonder Bill Clinton added a superb twist to the campaign by greeting mothers from a Jewish community center in Los Angeles, where three children were shot last year by a racist spree killer. It was brilliant television with a concise message: If you don't support "commonsense" gun policies, you're not only in favor of "kids shooting kids," but you also favor white supremacists and neo-Nazis. Who else but the lunatic right would question the collective wisdom of the thundering maternal herd? Clinton asserted that "if a couple hundred thousand people show up here and several hundred thousand at these sites around the country it ought to send a signal that we want America to be a safe country and common sense gun legislation is part of the strategy." In fact, it was nothing like "a couple of hundred thousand," but it was amusing to see how the papers consistently inflated the number of marchers. If only the late, lamented Carl Sagan were here, we would presumably have got the figure into the billions and billions.

By the way, did anybody notice how easily the gun-control debate has, just in the past few months, segued from demonizing handguns to "guns" in general? There are tens of millions of Americans owning rifles and shotguns who assumed that the whole issue was about pistols and so-called "Saturday Night Specials," and thus had nothing to do with them. Guess again.

Well, there are a great many problems with the policies suggested by the Marching Moms, not least in the basic issue which ostensibly motivates them. For one thing, there is no epidemic of kids killing kids, and the oft-quoted figure of 5,000 children killed by guns each year (12 a day, remember) is baloney. In 1998, the number of youths younger than 18 murdered by any method was fewer than 2,000, according to federal statistics, and an awful lot of those were infants or toddlers killed by parents and family members who virtually never used guns. We can only get a figure vaguely approaching 5,000 by including all homicides of "children" up to age 21, killed by whatever means. And the homicide rate for young people has plummeted in recent years.

But assume, for the sake of argument, that the threat to children is far greater than any evidence would suggest, and that we are dealing with a "gun-violence crisis." In virtually none of the reporting of the Momists was it acknowledged that Americans do not own guns due to their brutal stupidity or their callous neglect of children's interests, but because they believe they have a fundamental right to gun ownership, and that this right exists for exceedingly good reasons—above all, self-defense. In the real world, there is a wide spectrum of opinions about guns and gun ownership, so that the correctness of the anti-gun position is far from obvious.

From a social-science perspective, a significant body of evidence suggests that guns often deter crime, and that laws permitting private citizens to carry weapons for personal protection have a strong deterrent effect on violent crime. In fairness, any listing of firearms deaths must include numbers for those whose lives were saved by guns. Although this is the well-argued position of an impressive group of scholars, they do not claim infallibility, and future studies may challenge these findings. Nevertheless, what we know now tends to confirm the superbly argued equation of "more guns, less crime" proposed by John Lott, and those who challenge this perspective are on the defensive. One corollary of this conclusion is that gun locks and "smart" guns, which can be fired only by the owner, would detract from the defensive function of firearms. Unless and until robbers and rapists can be induced to respond to the polite request, "Hold on a minute, I'm trying to enter my six-digit code," smart guns are an extraordinarily stupid idea which will cause a great deal of innocent blood to be shed.

In legal and constitutional matters, too, there is ample room for debate, but from where we stand now, the pro-gun arguments have a strong advantage. This is particularly true of the tired arguments about whether the Framers intended the Second Amendment to recognize an individual or a collective right to bear arms. For the anti-gunners, the wording implies gun ownership only in the context of "a well regulated Militia" such as the National Guard; for their opponents, the right is as individual as the right of free speech or religion. For anyone familiar



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with English and colonial American history, the debate is largely irrelevant because both sides are correct. Of course the clause refers to a militia, but a militia made up of individuals who bring their own private weapons with them to train and fight, the weapons in question being the appropriate military technology of the era. Throughout the Middle Ages, governments were deeply involved in enforcing the equivalent of "gun control," which meant harassing and fining the king's subjects until they could be induced to obey their legal duties to be armed sufficiently to help defend the realm. From the point of view of an honest historian, the Second Amendment not only permits individuals to own and carry weapons, it implies that such ownership is demanded as a condition of citizenship. We can speculate on why such a requirement is not stated explicitly in the Bill of Rights, but 700 years of previous statutes make it pretty clear that this was intended. Our present legal position, therefore, seems a "commonsense" and "responsible" compromise between the ludicrous extremes of either banning or demanding the private ownership of firearms.

In the interests of consistency, I see no reason why the limitations on Second Amendment rights should not be extended to other equally clear parts of the Constitution. Think, for example, of the unhappiness that arises from the excessive use of the free-speech rights allegedly protected in the First Amendment, which allows citizens to criticize their neighbors or even the government. Don't white supremacists abuse their free-speech rights? Commonsense free-speech laws would recognize that the overbroad language of this clause reflected a barbarous age and should be reinterpreted for more advanced modern conditions. A cooling-off period is a natural development. Before anyone says or writes anything which might cause discomfort or unhappiness to some individual or group, he should be required to submit his remarks a week or so in advance to some agency, perhaps a Bureau of Tobacco, Firearms, and Harsh Language, where trained psychological experts could assess the speaker's suitability to engage in controversy. The discomfiting speech could then be presented publicly, subject to a limitation on the number of times in a month that speech licenses should be granted to any one individual. It would be particularly important to enforce a federal standard here, so that citizens could not utter speech in one of the less responsible jurisdictions—San Francisco, say, or Las Vegas—which could then be imported into a more polite environment, such as Washington, D.C. A decade or so of stringent licensing could greatly increase the degree of civility in this country. And I have not even begun to discuss the potential of civil litigation to help clean up the damage wrought by the extremist and absolutist upholders of the First Amendment. I can't wait until the Marching Moms latch on to this issue.

Making fun of the Million Moms and their media admirers would be much easier if there were not painful signs that the political currents are clearly moving in their direction, and that the right to gun ownership is under greater danger than ever before. The consequences are frightening. If we cannot defend the eminently lucid words of the Second Amendment, the intent of which is clear to any unbiased reader, why should any other part of the Constitution be sacrosanct? Commenting on the subversion of the Constitution in the 1850's, Lincoln remarked, "Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid." Gradually, American principles were qualified and perverted by fanatics until the law was nothing more than a partisan tool. If the Constitution was to be so debased, Lincoln declared, "I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy." Anyone for a trip?

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## MEDIA

# Big Laughs With Important People

*by Janet Scott Barlow*

Last spring, ABC News sent movie heartthrob Leonardo DiCaprio to interview Bill Clinton for an Earth Day special, a decision which reflected a lovely symmetry: In terms of human maturation, the 25-year-old actor and the 54-year-old President are approximately the same age (19).

Symmetry aside, all hell broke loose. The resultant tempest, played out over several weeks, was classic: full of irony aplenty, hypocrisy galore, and displays of ego so boundless that only celebrities could be the source.

The story goes that when ABC's veteran correspondents got wind of the DiCaprio/Clinton interview, they pitched a fit. Oh my, there was displeasure. It seems that having Mr. DiCaprio interview Mr. Clinton on Issues of Importance had violated that holy of holies, journalistic credibility—a commodity that heretofore had been, as every news consumer in America knows, absolutely rock solid and angel pure until young Leo winged in from Hollywood to defile the temple. (Are you laughing yet?)

Let us take a closer look at the ABC lineup that got so indignant at the prospect of a punk actor encroaching on its pristine turf. First, there is Sam Donaldson, whose preparation for his Sunday show *This Week* appears so superficial and meager that every question he asks and every observation he makes can be counted on, unfailingly, to be the wordiest possible example of the previous week's received wisdom. Donaldson's Sunday partner is Cokie Roberts, whom I have come to think of as Miss Cokie because she is given to rolling her eyes and announcing how "mothers would handle it," regardless of the topic being discussed. Roberts is the June Cleaver of American journalism, and most Sundays, she looks like it's all she can do to keep from pointing a finger and sputtering, "Sam, go to your room!"

Sharing the list with Sam and Miss Cokie is ABC's anchor-god, Peter Jennings, a man whose on-air urbanity has evolved over the years into genuine *hauteur*, as he gives off unmistakable hints of barely controlled disdain for every political conservative who has walked the face of the earth since the beginning of time.

And let us not forget Diane Sawyer, she of the wow-have-I-scored "interview" with six-year-old Elian Gonzalez, an event that was redefined as a "visit" after being roundly criticized as exploitative. No matter. The important thing was how empathic, how downright sweet, Sawyer appeared as she sat on the floor, the better to "relate" to little Elian.

Finally, we have arrived at Barbara



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Walters. In this age of celebrity journalism practiced by newspeople who want to function as hookers while being perceived as virgins, it is understandable that Walters enjoys a status even greater than Diane Sawyer's while at the same time conducting interviews that are cheesier than Sawyer's. It was Barbara Walters, you'll recall, who asked the questions that revealed the delusional emotional workings of Monica Lewinsky.

Finding himself surrounded by these very important employees with their very important concerns about very important issues of journalistic integrity, ABC News President David Westin sought to calm his corps of prima donnas by sending out an e-mail explaining that management most definitely had not sent Leonardo DiCaprio to the White House for a real-deal interview because, as he put it, "nobody is that stupid."

That statement proved to be both an intentional lie and the kind of misrepresentation of reality that results from isolation, insular thinking, and professional conceit. The lie was the claim that DiCaprio had gone to the White House for no more than a "walk-through." (Representatives of both the actor and the President adamantly insist otherwise.) The misrepresentation of reality was that nobody in big-time news is "that stupid." The fact is, they are that stupid all the time. American journalism has declined to the point where its main imperatives now seem limited to creating "news" by taking and publicizing political polls, which can then be used to influence (rather than reflect) public opinion; and shoving microphones in the faces of grieving citizens to question how they "feel" about their child being killed, their home washing away, or their sudden affliction with some deadly disease. With few exceptions, what isn't shallow in their coverage is biased; and what isn't biased is prurient. This being the journalistic environment, what's the difference whether Donaldson interviews Clinton or DiCaprio interviews Clinton—or whether Donaldson and Clinton interview DiCaprio?

The ideal coda to the ABC flap arrived a week after the story broke, in the form of the annual Radio and Television Correspondents Association Dinner. There, President Clinton told elaborate jokes at ABC's expense, while David Westin, looking green around the gills, pretended to be good-naturedly amused. To round things out, there was also much joshing about "cover-ups," along with many humorous references to the presidential travails of the past year. Perhaps the evening's most memorable moment centered on a joke that had the President seeking to end racism by asking a woman to remove her clothes and get "naked"—a joke to which the crowd of politicians and independent journalists responded with uproarious laughter, with no one laughing more uproariously than Bill Clinton himself. In other words, what was, little more than a year ago, a disgrace, a scandal, and a national trauma, was now, in this roomful of big dogs and insiders, nothing more than a source of mutually self-validating entertainment.

After this lavish press dinner—which received fairly extensive television and print coverage—Chris Matthews, host of CNBC's *Hardball*, asked *Newsweek* reporter Howard Fineman if watching the spectacle of journalists and elected officials getting off on each other might make the average citizen uneasy. Fineman seemed not to understand the question. As far as he was concerned, a tradition had been honored, the President had been hilarious, and everyone present had had a ball. So where was the problem?

But the question Matthews raised was relevant, especially for journalists who claim to be concerned about both the rapidly blurring line between news and entertainment and the increasingly low esteem in which their profession is held by the public. What cable news programming, C-SPAN, and the Internet have given the average American is more than just expanded access; we now get, from time to time, an unobstructed peek behind the wall. And it turns out that what's behind the wall is stuff like the Radio and Television Correspondents Association Dinner, where together the President of the United States and the journalists who cover him (supposedly on our behalf) smugly amuse themselves with jokes not only about the President's wanton sexual proclivities, but also their shared inclination as newsmen and politicians to lie and then lie about lying.

The problem is not that politicians get together and have a jokefest, or that journalists get together and do the same. The problem is that they do it together—and do it as though they were hidden from the contradictions and hypocrisies that result from such behavior. But journalists are no longer hidden (although they seem the last people to realize this). The irony is that the invasiveness of their professional conduct has rendered their own privacy, like everyone else's, nonexistent. Everything is visible now, including the social habits of the inside-the-Beltway crowd. And Howard Fineman's glib obtuseness notwithstanding, the spectacle is repugnant: self-referential, self-congratulatory, almost comically elitist. It isn't inside-baseball that is on display at events like the Radio and Television Correspondents Association Dinner; it's *inside* inside-baseball, a game within a game within a game: *How many layers of exclusivity can we create for ourselves?*

But the problem for the Sams and Barbaras of the world is that we have reached the point—thanks in part to the Sams and Barbaras of the world—where anyone and everyone thinks he's a player. Not long after her interview with Barbara Walters, Monica Lewinsky was reported to be interested in a permanent position on Walters' daily talk show, *The View*. And why not? What would be required of Miss Lewinsky in that situation is no more than what is required of Walters—or of Peter Jennings or Leonardo DiCaprio: the ability to attract customers and add to the bottom line.

Personally, I'm sorry Lewinsky didn't get the job. Think of the outright hilarity that would have ensued at the Radio and Television Correspondents Association Dinner as Monica regaled her journalistic colleagues (and the President, too, of course), with her unique comedic insights on how to, like, get ahead in life.

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## HISTORY

# The Myth of "Red Fascism"

*by Paul Gottfried*

In a recent discussion with a younge colleague about his book-in-progres on American historian Richard Hofs tadter, I learned that, during the studer riot at Columbia in 1968, Hofstadter r



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peatedly likened student radicals to European "fascists." My colleague found this remarkable, given the fact that Hofstadter had spent decades agonizing over the "paranoid style" of the American nativist right. For Hofstadter and others of like mind, however, the campus radicals were not progressive reformers but haters of "liberal democracy." Some of them, in deference to black nationalists, took a pro-Arab, anti-Israel stand; and this confirmed for Cold War liberals (soon to become neoconservatives) that their enemies—apparently on the left—were actually throwbacks to the interwar right.

This political geography went as far back as the "red fascist" images popularized by Truman and other Democrats during the early years of the Cold War. In order to smooth the transition from battling international fascism to resisting international communism, it was useful to blur the distinction between the two. Both were portrayed as faces of the same totalitarian foe; and though Stalinoid European refugees presented the "authoritarian personality" as an exclusively right-wing pathology, it was easily coopted as a Cold War liberal weapon. By the early 50's, Seymour Martin Lipset was speaking of fascist personality development in Marxist-Leninists. Some historians, most famously James Gregor, tried to make the comparison from the opposite direction, though (for obvious reasons) with less acclaim. In an ambitious work on Italian fascism, Gregor, by picking his evidence selectively, made it appear that fascists were on the anti-democratic left.

Although not everyone who drew such comparisons was on the same wavelength (one thinks especially of the late Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddhin), most exponents of "red fascism" and its thematic permutations belonged to the same club. The postwar center-left found it comforting to believe that everyone opposed to "liberal democracy" (particularly in its New Deal American form) was a "totalitarian" or an "authoritarian" in need of coercive reeducation. This is the recurrent theme of the *Vital Center*, *Political Man*, and other products of the Cold War liberal imagination that flourished between the late 40's and mid-60's. Its supreme illustration, though persistently misrepresented as a "conservative classic," is Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*. In this best-selling tirade against Germans, postmodernists, hippies, and popular music, Bloom reprises the *idée fixe* of Cold War liberals: that what appears to be an unkempt, malodorous, and riotous enemy on the left can be traced back to the anti-American, European, and especially German right. It was nice for a certified member of the postwar democratic left to think that he did not have to change his enemies as the Cold War heated up, or as campuses were occupied and littered by self-described Maoists in the late 60's and by hirsute women burning their bras in the 70's. Unacceptable leftists could be packed into the far right or introduced as anti-democratic Teutons in drag.

The argument that the New Left had something to do with the fascism is absurd: The New Left was far too tame to resemble the Nazis or communist thugs who destroyed the Weimar Republic and routinely murdered people in the process. In terms of violence and anti-semitism, the New Left fell ridiculously below the standards of savagery of the Nazis, even before they came to power. The comparison of strident hippies to Latin fascists is equally farfetched, but for opposite reasons. The intellectual fathers of European fascism, in contrast to Angela Davis, Fidel Castro, and Franz Fanon, were eminently civilized gentlemen, including such figures as Giovanni Gentile, Vilfredo Pareto, Maurice Barres, and José Antonio Primo de Rivera. The founding generation of this movement had no desire to tear down either civilization or sexual mores. What concerned them was the explosiveness of the left and the fear that bourgeois society was too decadent to protect the world it had built or inherited. To the extent that fascists began to imitate the opposite side, they did so largely to forestall it. Thus they produced, in the memorable phrase of Ernst Nolte, "a counterrevolutionary imitation" of the revolutionary left.

It is true that serious thinkers and social critics could be found temporarily connected with the New Left—for example, Eugene Genovese, Paul Piccone, and Christopher Lasch. But these associations proved brittle, and thoughtful fellow travelers fled the movement with varying degrees of disgust. The reasons are clearly put in Stanley Rothman's *Roots of American Radicalism* or in Genovese's colorful commentaries. Both provide pictures of sexually disordered, often lewd exhibitionists full of uncontrolled rage against authority figures, starting with their parents. Rothman offers further insights into New Left anger by contrasting Jewish and Christian radicals and explaining why the former were more prone to sexual exhibition and the latter to random violence. My own memory attests that we cannot exaggerate the intellectual and social vulgarity of these radicalized louts. Indeed, fairness requires that any comparisons between them and the fascists favor the *squadristi* who marched on Rome in October 1922.

Moreover, the two movements had dramatically different fates. While in the 20's and early 30's, Western progressives and Catholic corporatists found elements of Italian fascism worth exporting, and labor legislation under Hoover and FDR looks like it was drafted by the Confederazione Nazionale Sindacati Fascisti, by the 40's the fascist movement had collapsed. It had been vulgarized in Spain by Franco and identified with murderous imperialism through its selective absorption by the Third Reich. Fascism today lives on only as a hate word, invoked by the media against anyone or anything that fails to comply with its ever more stringent standards of political correctness, from Pat Buchanan to European critics of immigration.

The New Left, by contrast, has made out well. While New Leftists had once rapped about the evil of impersonal bureaucratic structures, they were happy to leave that particular concern to others, such as the denizens of right-wing fever swamps, once they became part of the "system." They became the shock troops and cheering gallery of the therapeutic state. Compared to the New Left's policy efforts on behalf of alternative lifestyles and marginalized minorities, the social changes wrought by the Italian fascists were minimal. The Carta del Lavoro brought before the Fascist Gran Consiglio in 1927 by the "anti-bourgeois" minister of labor Giuseppe Bottai did not even begin to create the proclaimed national workers' revolution. The Carta was watered down into a pale forerunner of the New Deal, and its fate illustrates the fascist reluctance to tamper with bourgeois society: Don't look to Italian family heads to turn the social order inside out! Only the Nazis could approach the nihilistic mentality of our own political class.

Despite its fire-eating rhetoric, early fascism, which was almost exclusively Latin or Latin-derivative, left the surrounding society largely intact. This was not only due to its counterrevolutionary aspect, but because of where it took root. Latin Catholic cultures were far less



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open to restructuring than Germanic Protestant ones. The human landscape was too cluttered, especially by a well-organized Church and tightly-knit families, to favor a central state or a revolutionary ideology demanding absolute power. Atomized societies that stress individual gratification are more promising terrain for such an enterprise. For these reasons, Latin fascism turned out to be a highly ornate but rudimentary instrument of managerial control. Listening recently to one of the younger neocons, who was up in arms against the "fascist impulse" in literary modernism, I was reminded of Bill Clinton celebrating our victory over "the tyranny of George the Third." Note what Jesus said on the subject of motes and beams!

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## FILM

# We, Who Are Always About to Die

*by George McCartney*

### *Gladiator*

*Produced by DreamWorks*
*Directed by Ridley Scott*
*Screenplay by David H. Franzoni and John Logan*
*Released by MCA/Universal Pictures*

### *Frequency*

*Produced by New Line Cinema*
*Directed by Gregory Hoblit*
*Screenplay by Toby Emmerich*
*Released by New Line Cinema*

Despite its flagrant historical inaccuracies and its preference for spectacle over drama, Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* is a triumph of popular entertainment. Before the film devolves into a simple-minded revenge story, it manages—almost in spite of itself—to invest its hero with a genuine tragic dimension. He is a man courageous enough to face the world's treacheries in the full knowledge that they will inevitably defeat him—at least in this life. Impressively played by Russell Crowe, this kind of hero makes one proud to be human.

The film begins with an enormous close-up of a man's hand, palm down, skimming across the tops of budded stalks in a seemingly endless wheat field. The scene is drenched in the golden pastoral haze of a languorous, late-afternoon sun. Then the man stops to look at a robin nesting in his path. The camera cuts to his face for the first time, as a smile breaks forth from his weathered features, and then cuts to the same man now standing in the blue-gray light of a wintry dawn on the Danube River, his face grimly reflective, even rueful. He stoops to pick up some dirt, rubbing it between his palms. We know he's preparing for a major task, but only when the camera pulls back to reveal another field, this one populated by seemingly endless legions of Roman soldiers, do we get a glimmer of what this might be.

With this simple montage, Scott introduces us to Crowe as Maximus, the general who is about to lead Rome's army against the Quadi, a particularly irksome Germanic tribe threatening to breach the empire's northern boundary in A.D. 180, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Nothing has been said, but Maximus' character is revealed to us in his hands. Again and again, we will see him measuring the height of wheat under his outstretched fingers, rubbing dirt into his palms, hefting weapons for their weight and balance, managing horses with ease and grace. The same hands that slaughter enemies are shown clasped in prayer at his homemade altar when he calls upon his ancestors for guidance. "I will try to honor you with the dignity you taught me," he says, before taking up figurines of his wife and son in his battle-scarred fingers and kissing them. This is an extraordinarily capable man who longs for peace but is ready to shoulder his wartime duty. The masculine honor with which Crowe invests all these gestures is powerfully affecting.

Although he seems a simple, straightforward fellow, Maximus sees things as a whole. As the battle begins, his lieutenant surveys the clamoring Germanic hordes with evident disgust. "People should know when they're conquered," he sniffs. Maximus asks with quiet reproach, "Would you, Quintus? Would I?" The battle that ensues is feverish and short, filled with men hacking away at one another in a tumult of rage. Through it all, Maximus keeps his head, wading into the fray with controlled ferocity. Once the foe lies vanquished, he is more concerned with the welfare of his men than with any personal glory he may have won.

Maximus understands his place, and he equally understands and respects his enemy. Subduing them is his job. That's all. He has no hankering for spoils or political power. He is genuinely appalled when Marcus Aurelius (Richard Harris, playing the sickly 59-year-old emperor with touching fragility) chooses to reward his virtue by making him heir to the throne. Maximus protests that he wants to go home to his wife and son. It's been "two years, two hundred and sixty-four days and this morning" since he last saw them, he explains. More poignant are his thoughts, which we hear in voice-over: "I live only to hold them again, for all else is only dust and air." This phrase will echo through the film as a refrain accompanying the visual motif of his hand skimming the wheat. His ambitions are the simplest and, hence, the noblest.

With his devotion to his family, his commitment to honor, his contempt for worldly success, his constant awareness of mortality, Maximus is the living embodiment of the philosophy of disinterested idealism to be found in *The Meditations* of the historical Marcus. It's dramatically fitting that the film's dying emperor would choose such a man to be his heir. Of course, as they used to say in Brooklyn, it's also baloney. The real Marcus Aurelius has been a puzzle to historians precisely because he put aside his notions of stoic honor and chose his unworthy son, Commodus, to succeed him. Obviously, this story wasn't the one Scott wanted to tell; he wanted something more rousing. In the film, Commodus (played with suitably warped petulance by Joaquin Phoenix) goes into a pouting, sibilant rage upon learning of his father's plan, killing him rather than letting the imperial purple pass to an unsophisticated general. The patricide is followed by orders to execute Maximus and kill his family. In another film, this would have set the stage for a crude revenge drama, with some splashily heroic bloodletting. Fortunately, by sheer force of thespian will, Crowe disrupts what oth



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erwise might have been an all-too-familiar narrative arc. The formidable inwardness of his acting makes us feel his character's heartbreak and brooding anger every step of the way.

When Maximus, badly wounded, escapes his would-be executioners, he falls into the hands of Proximo, a former gladiator. This impresario of the arena buys and trains slaves to butcher or be butchered for the enjoyment of the mob. Oliver Reed, who died before the film was finished, gives Proximo the ruthless, frightening cynicism one would expect of such a flesh peddler. It is further testimony to the strength of Maximus' character that he is able to draw forth the vestigial humanity residing in this monster.

Although Maximus is visibly disgusted by the spectacles in which he must participate, he proves invincible in the arena. In one scene, he dispatches five opponents in a row and then turns to the cheering crowd, demanding, "Are you not entertained? Is not this why you're here?" He then hurls his sword into the Roman equivalent of the box seats. He feels no elation in his bloody deeds. His opponents meant to kill him, and he did what was necessary. For the audience that applauds his murders, he feels nothing but contempt.

Crowe plays these gladiatorial scenes with none of the now conventional, muscle-bound Schwarzenegger posturing. He is stocky and doesn't have the striated body of today's gym-trimmed performers. His movements, however, display an economy of effort noticeable in the best athletes. He conveys perfectly the uncanny strength that's possible when muscle, mind, and spirit work in harmony.

The die is cast when Proximo takes Maximus to Rome to compete in the games Commodus is holding. Here, amid Scott's marvelously computer-generated eternal city, with its temples, Senate, and Colosseum, the inevitable showdown will take place. It is the film's conceit that Commodus revived gladiatorial spectacles his father had banned. (Actually, the games were standard fare under both men.) He does so in order to pander to the degenerate tastes of the mob. Like a modern politician, he seeks to win their loving approval, thereby consolidating his power. His strategy stumbles, however, once Maximus shows up and proves his mettle in the arena. The crowd instantly switches its allegiance to the former general. To his chagrin, Commodus realizes he has inadvertently empowered his old enemy. The principled Maximus, on the other hand, at first remains unimpressed by his sudden popularity. When Commodus' sister, Lucilla (Connie Nielsen) tells him of his growing influence, he scornfully retorts, "I only have power to amuse the mob." Knowing better, she replies, "That is power." Had Lucilla actually said this, her renown for prescience would certainly still resonate among today's poll-taking, demographically sophisticated political scientists, and her image would surely grace every televised report from the *New York Times*-CBS survey bureau.

In the last 20 minutes, the film's melodrama almost descends to bathos. But by this time, I was so taken with Maximus and his mission that I stopped asking questions and went with it. Afterward, however, I couldn't help wondering why Scott didn't take a small portion of his $103 million budget and hire writers with enough wit to tell the story and respect history at the same time. The film's scrambling of facts is distracting. Along with the discrepancies already mentioned, there is the completely gratuitous decision to make Commodus behave like his distant imperial predecessor, Caligula. Commodus makes eyes at his sister and demands they marry, as Caligula did with his sister, Drusilla. If this fiction is meant to demonstrate how perversely distant Commodus is from the decency Maximus exemplifies, the behavior of the historical Commodus needs no embellishment. While there's no indication he harbored any untoward interest in his sister, he kept a harem of 300 women and as many boys to satisfy his whims. Perhaps Scott judged such gender-neutral promiscuity no longer sufficiently offensive to contemporary tastes.

This movie carries an "R" rating. It's for violence only. Except for a few eye-rolling innuendos Commodus practices on his entirely unresponsive sister, the film is positively chaste when it comes to sexual matters. As for violence, there's far less than reported. Several reviewers in the more refined press have squealed about lopped limbs and cracked skulls. They're simply not on the screen. Such images reside nowhere but in the overheated imaginations of our would-be moral guardians, the very same critics who sing praises for such muck as *American Beauty* and *American Psycho*. Most of the violence in *Gladiator* is the product of camera work and film editing. Scott has shot the battles closely with mobile and hand-held cameras and edited his footage with a pace that D.W. Griffith and Sergei Eisenstein would have appreciated. This makes the arena scenes seem unnervingly wild, but it's all suggestion. As the carnage supposedly takes place, we often don't see much more than a blur of motion. Scott relies more on the resources of his medium and less on the special-effects department, which easily could have provided him with facsimiles of butchered bodies. When a gladiator swings his sword at the hand of a man to whom he's chained, we first see his weapon rise, then the hand in extreme close-up, followed by the sword's downward arc, after which the camera darts away. Although some swear they've seen it, there is no shot of a severed hand twitching bloodily in the sand. The only cutting here was done in the editing room.

I mention this because I think this is one R-rated film that older children, say 15 and up, might view with profit. It's not often they get to see such a hero in films today, a religious family man who submits with enormous courage and stoic understanding to the duties and limitations life imposes upon us.

The rating this film really needs is "I" for inaccurate: Parents strongly cautioned to provide a corrective history les-


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son after the show.

Unlike *Gladiator*, Gregory Hoblit's *Frequency* transcends mortal limitations—at least temporarily, which is only fitting for its time-travel premise.

At the sentimental heart of this film is a fairly typical, if seldom discussed, wish-fulfillment fantasy: the desire to reach back in time and prevent the catastrophes that have already befallen us. Who wouldn't want to encourage a long-dead parent to quit smoking before succumbing to lung cancer or, in the case of this film, warn your fireman dad to avoid making a fatal mistake fighting a conflagration 30 years ago? I suspect it's guilt that keeps us mum about these fantasies. Through some solipsistic alchemy, we translate our current knowledge into something we should have realized and acted on in the past. Irrationally, we feel responsible for events that were beyond our control.

*Frequency* charms us by suspending this guilt. It indulges our fantasies of *ex post facto* rescues vicariously by giving John Sullivan his chance to save his father, Frank, when he finds he can talk to him across time with a ham radio. Hokey? No question. But Dennis Quaid as Frank and James Caviezel as John make the hokum work. As father and son gradually discovering one another across the decades, they are achingly credible.

Nostalgia, however, soon takes a back seat to adventure. By saving his father from death, John sets in motion a new and more disastrous sequence of events. Soon, father and son are working together feverishly to stop a serial killer from murdering one or more of their family. Their detective work, carried out simultaneously in two time periods, is a marvel of intricate plotting that had me thoroughly baffled at points. Fortunately, my 11-year-old, Liam, was on hand to explain matters to me after the show.

Suffice it to say that this four-dimensional puzzle is great fun, and its pieces actually fit together. However, I wouldn't have minded if they hadn't. The film's real strength resides in the encounter of father and son across time and mortality. The experience grants them an awareness of life's uncertainties. Were we able to sustain such recognition in our own lives, it would undoubtedly render our relations with those closest to us immeasurably fuller.

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## SOCIETY

# Teen Angel

*by Aaron D. Wolf*

"This is not your Grandma's pageant!" the announcer proudly proclaimed. No, indeed, this was the 1999 Miss Teen U.S.A. pageant from Shreveport, Louisiana—"Brittney's Beat" (a reference to teen super-Lolita Brittney Spears). Why even acknowledge that this sorry event happened? Because it provides a window into the existence of an American phenomenon, one that has profoundly shaped our culture—the teenager.

In Western civilization past, there was no such thing, *per se*, as a teenager. There were children, and there were adults. In patriarchal Christian society, a girl passed from being under the authority of her father to that of her husband. Boys became young men, husbands, and fathers. Both were deemed fit to marry in their mid-teens, having been taught hands-on how to manage a household. Households were units—like church and country—in which there was a level of solidarity. Children worked alongside their parents to support the household. A father as "head of the household" bore responsibility for his wife, children, and servants, both monetarily and spiritually. This structure flows from Scripture and the tradition of the Church. We Lutherans see it emblazoned in the Small Catechism, where Luther begins nearly every passage with "This is how the head of the household is to teach concerning . . ."

In modern America, child-labor laws helped to nail shut the coffin lid of the mortified Christian family. The abstract "child" was deemed fit only for (public) school, not for work, and the *federales* became the *de facto* heads of households by usurping the God-given rule of fathers. Adolescents, fit physically (if not mentally, for lack of training) for the responsibilities of marriage and family, became modernity's *tertium quid*—no longer children, not trained or allowed to be adults.

This discrepancy has taken its toll upon our culture. Rock 'n' roll, the soundtrack of our VH-1 lives, is a teenage product, marketing sex in the form of nursery rhymes. Soda pop, America's syrupy, puerile wine, is the ubiquitous drink in our restaurants. And oddities like the "age of consent" remain unchallenged in our society and cast teenagers—particularly girls—as sexual objects.

It is illegal for an 18-year-old male to fornicate with an "underage" female. And yet the Miss Teen U.S.A. producers, the censors, the contestants' parents, and the viewers do not flinch at underage girls parading around in high-cut bikinis while the two announcers say such things as "I like Miss Texas' body."

Increasingly, this third category of life has become identified with virtually unrestrained lust and immorality. Rather than question the cultural factors that define these adolescents as people fit for sex but not for marriage or the responsibility of work, we fret over our children's exposure to *Dawson's Creek* and the Backstreet Boys.

Because of the lurid attractiveness of what the Psalmist called the "sins of our youth," being a teenager has been elevated to the American ideal. "Those were the best days of my life," pined rock 'n' roller Bryan Adams. Fortysomethings (in what traditionally would have been considered the "best days of one's life") have mid-life crises and long to be teenagers again.

Rather than stand up and fight, churches since the 1950's have hired "youth pastors" to provide sexy activities and Clearasil Bible studies to teens. In the 70's, youth pastors began to hawk "Christian" rock—a marketable, sanitized, money-and-sex machine. Private Christian high schools (modeled after government schools) adopted all of the trappings of their secular counterparts—a displaced, coed group, spending eight hours a day together, plus road trips for the teams and cheerleaders, proms, and homecomings. Yet church leaders are puzzled by statistics that indicate that *their* young people now have higher rates of premarital sex and pregnancy.

This cultural degeneration cannot be undone by getting the Miss Teen U.S.A. pageant to return to one-piece suits. It cannot be fixed by flooding the market with more "innocuous" shows like *Touched by an Angel* or by hiring a hipper youth pastor. It must be solved by restoring real homes—or rather, households.

*Aaron D. Wolf is the director of external activities for The Rockford Institute.*



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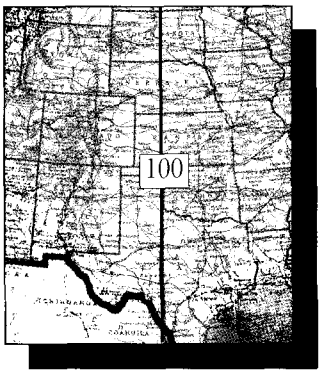
# The Hundredth Meridian

*by Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

## The Centaur

I used to make fun of them, those bare-legged, ball-capped figures grunting under the weight of 90-pound loads giving them the appearance of Neil Armstrong on the moon or a man bearing his own coffin on his back: tall, headless silhouettes lurching from around a bend in the trail to dispel the illusion of primordial wilderness and scare the horse apples out of seasoned stock. So what am I doing trudging the hills above Laramie, a Kelty pack filled with 65 pounds of rocks and assorted trash sawing my shoulders and pounding my kidneys, in 42-degree weather with the wind blowing 35 miles an hour out of the northeast? It's Tom Sheeley's fault for having talked me into making a trip off the North Rim of the Grand Canyon from which horses are barred by the National Park Service, along with the firearms required to put the less surefooted animals out of their misery. You actually need a PERMIT to go down there yourself—pay good money to the U.S. government 2,500 miles away in Washington, D.C., for the privilege of packing cases of wine and beer in on your own knotted-up, broken-down back. It isn't her bailiwick, of course, but I expect to speak firmly to Sheeley's old buddy Maddy Albright when she shows up with the rest of the gang from Flagstaff at the Jacob's Lake Inn at three o'clock in the afternoon of April 13. "Who was your Somalian waiter *last* year?" I'll ask her. The State Department wouldn't treat a bunch of Kosovo Serbs this way—not while it thought someone was looking, anyway.

Laramie to Steamboat Springs, Colorado; Steamboat to Vernal, Utah; Vernal to Duschesne and down to Price over Gray Head Pass; Price to Castle Dale to I-70 to Richfield; Richfield to Circleville to Panguitch to Kanab, following the Sevier River; Kanab to Fredonia, Arizona; Fredonia to Jacob's Lake Inn: a total of 699 miles, taking a day and a half with gas prices climbing steadily from $1.32 in Laramie to $1.87 in Kanab, where Japanese and French tourists piled from the tour buses and I had my photo taken twice. (It's probably sticking to some fridge door in Tokyo or Toulon, a souvenir of someone's encounter with a Genu-wine Western Badman, looking tender and slightly irritable from too much Chilean red wine taken behind drawn curtains in his motel room in Latter-Day Saintly Richfield the evening before.) The Inn was quiet, no one around but a few overweight pre-season tourists and a Twig Pig with a gun on his hip, looking for a redneck like me to shoot. I drank a beer in the truck, wondering whether, if I tossed the empty can in the air, he'd be able to hit it with his .38 Special, and went to call Rhonda in Laramie to see how my horses were getting along without me. When I got off the phone my watch said 3:45, meaning Sheeley & Company were running three-quarters of an hour behind schedule. They pulled into the parking area at four o'clock sharp by my watch, 3:00 P.M. local time (I'd forgotten Arizona doesn't observe Daylight Saving): Tom, his daughter Cory, and colleague Tim Smith from the music department at Northern Arizona University, their three backpacks bulging like T.E. Lawrence's baggage train in the truck bed, along with ten or twelve cases of Busch's beer—lacking only Maddy Albright, who Tom explained had been dispatched by President Clinton to an international conference in Cairo organized to protest the plight of enslaved gay people in the Sudan. Her absence was regrettable, as the expedition would now be lacking a beer truck, but it's as well for us to be reminded from time to time of the truth of the motto *Nolite Confidere in Principibus*. Tom switched vehicles to ride with me, and we entered the park headed for the North Rim 45 miles to the south, followed by Tim and Corey in Tim's Toyota pickup and drinking Busch to celebrate the start of our latest adventure together.




The Grand Canyon was formed by the Colorado River cutting through a bulge lifting high above the north-central Arizona desert floor. At the North Rim, the Kaibab Plateau attains an elevation of nearly 9,000 feet. Climbing higher, we came to wide expanses of glary corn snow bordered by forests of Ponderosa pine fading away in deeper and deeper shades of cold blue shadow.

"We could be in trouble," Tom said. "As warm a winter as we've had, I didn't expect to find this much snow up here."

A mile farther on we came to the signpost marking the start of Forest Service Road 422. The gravel apron shaded off into mud, and beyond the mud was the soft snow, filling in the cut as far as the treeline across the low swales and the drifted-over creek bed.

"Do you have a shovel with you?" Tom asked.

"Sure. It's in the toolbox."

"Let's try it, then."

I stared at the slumping sea of glazed snow ahead. It was a sight to have made even my old comrade-in-arms Jack Mootz consider where he expected to spend the night. But Tom was in thrall to his vision of the Esplanade, Thunder River, and Deer Creek, as Coronado had been entranced by the Seven Cities of Cibola.

"You want to try and push *that* for 45 miles?"

"Let's see how far we can make it, anyway. If we get stuck, we can dig out."

Well, yes . . . we *could*, but the fun was not supposed to start until the trailhead, 45 miles away, with my 65-pound pack on a crumbly, ankle-twisting descent I'd been promised was steeper than breakfast in Aspen.

I locked the wheel hubs in and downshifted to compound low for a halfhearted run at the snowfield. We made 20 yards before the truck succumbed to the forces of inertia and quit, spinning its tires deeper into their slushy grooves.

"Let me try," Tom suggested.

Positive thinking, while admirable, has its limits. He gained another 30 yards before the truck went down again, this time in snow that packed the driveline in a bit more snugly than I felt comfortable with. Cory and Tim climbed from the



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Jap truck and stood, feet apart and hands in the pockets of their hiking shorts, to observe the situation from behind dark sunshades.

"Why don't I see what a lighter vehicle can do?" Tim offered.

Not even Toyota can walk on water. This one made a fair try at doing so before retreating hurriedly to a reassuring mud base a few feet from the shoulder of the highway.

"Even if we made a breakthrough here, we don't have gas enough to break trail for the next 45 miles," I said.

Youth may be wasted on the young, but not resilience.

"Let's hike Paria!" Cory cried. "We're always talking about going there, and we've never done it yet."

Tom caught his daughter up in a bearhug to give her a hearty kiss.

"Good thinking, Cor," he said. But it wasn't before we'd had another Busch and were halfway down the switchbacks coming off the Kaibab with a view of the Vermilion Cliffs to the north that Paria Canyon began to seem like a satisfactory exchange.

An hour and a half later we were camped above the Colorado River on its way through Marble Canyon a few miles south from Lee's Ferry. Down here on the desert where the temperature was 30 degrees warmer than on the North Rim, the hot wind lifted our caps and sent them bowling across the rimrock toward the edge of the gorge. A mile or so downstream and six or seven hundred feet below, a river expedition was encamped in a bend, its bright yellow-and-blue boats drawn up on the silt shore, the camp fires flaring red among the tamarisk and salt cedar. We finished guying the tents with stones against the wind, then gathered around Tim's truck for the cocktail hour. Behind the town of Marble Canyon, the east-facing cliff showed dark and indistinct against the bright evening sky, sinking prematurely into night.

"Up there's where Ed's property is," Tom said, pointing.

"Is that where? You know, I never knew he owned that land until you told me. Clarke never mentioned it."

Abbey's Roost: never built on, never—to use the proper real-estate terminology—"developed." Anyway, he has an infinitely better vantage point now.

In the morning we stopped for breakfast at the Marble Canyon Café, then got on the road to Page, where Glen Canyon Dam still stood: seemingly invincible, in actuality clogging up with silt—the silent killer—to a degree that guarantees a fatal coronary within the next hundred years or so. North of the dam we crossed into Utah and continued west to the upper stretches of the Paria River, which heads in the vicinity of the Escalante-Grand Staircase National Monument grabbed off by President Clinton in 1996, partly as a sop to the environmentalist movement, partly to punish the state of Utah for not having voted for him in 1992.

We stopped briefly at the Park Service's visitor's center to purchase four three-day passes at $15 a head (toothbrush and handtowel not included) and continued on a mile farther south by the gravel road paralleling the river to the trailhead. The day was hot, so we all had a beer before setting out. (Or it could have been the other way round.) The blue Kelty pack resting upright on the tailgate of the truck looked as if it had been packed by—and for—Arnold Schwarzenegger. I took hold of the frame with both hands, lifted the thing, and swung it off the tailgate and around behind me, thrusting with my right arm as if I were trying to get into an overcoat. Suspended by the strength of one arm only, the pack slipped sideways, pulling me off balance as it dropped to the ground. If God had meant man to backpack, He'd have given him a lobotomy first. Finally, Cory demonstrated for me the technique appropriate to the self-loading human mule: Insert knee beneath pack, boost onto tailgate of truck, back into harness, and fasten.

At last we started, dropping off the steep flood-scoured bank into the riverbed—braids of shallow water over clinging red mud, with patches of alkali and, in places, quicksand. Trudge, trudge, trudge. It wasn't as bad as I'd expected, being 65 pounds overweight and carrying my belly on my back. At first the old ski break above my right ankle protested, but it gave up complaining after a few hundred yards. Trudge, trudge. My legs felt good, my wind—as ever—superb. Heart and lungs okay. The trouble was with the pack, which kept trying to pull me over backwards like an inexperienced rider reining back on a rearing horse. As tight as I'd drawn the harness, I was aware of a space between the upper frame and my shoulder blades wide enough to fit a small child into. Also, the thing had a disconcerting tendency to pitch sideways, throwing me off balance in mid-stride. To compensate for conditions, I discovered a bent position, forward from the hips like a centaur, that allowed me to take the full weight of the pack on my back rather than above the kidneys, where it ordinarily belongs. Otherwise I felt pretty good. The footing was mostly even, while the riverbed tilted, as riverbeds are wont to do, gently downhill. Trudge, trudge, trudge. Had I had the honor to serve in the U.S. Army, the forced march would definitely have been my MOS.

We'd gone a little over three miles when Tom called a halt at a spreading cottonwood tree growing above the floodplain among buff-colored tumuli of Navajo sandstone. The map showed the canyon narrowing to a crevasse a mile or so downstream: Quite possibly this was the last suitable spot to put a base camp. I'd been looking forward to covering the 37.4 miles to Lee's Ferry in a single march, but orders are orders. We shed the gear against the sloping rock face and put the tents up, while Tom commenced Operation Leadfoot to clear the area of fire ants. It was close to five before we had the camp secured and broke out the portable bar from the packs. Seated with our backs against the cooling rock, cup in hand, we surveyed the stony wilderness above the canyon—swales, sheer walls and turrets of rock: red, tan, purple, yellow—in backward motion against round white clouds drifting eastward. Less than two miles downstream the real Paria, the one we knew only from pictures, began: a damp red defile, hundreds of feet deep and more than 30 miles in length, from where the sky is only intermittently visible, offering no egress or escape from the deadly torrent produced by an innocent afternoon thundershower 10 or 15 miles away.

"You know," Tom said, "it's providential we didn't make it to the North Rim. The way that pack's working for him Chilton would have been in real danger on the steeps."

Beginner's luck, I thought. Maybe this summer I'd drop $300 on a good outfit and get into backpacking in a serious way, before my horses grow too old to carry me and my camp into the wilderness. Only, what happens when *I* get too old?

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